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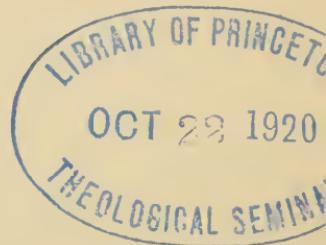
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Jesus and the resurrection

JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION

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THIRTY ADDRESSES
FOR
GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER



BY THE
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TO THE PARISHIONERS
OF
S. MARK'S, PHILADELPHIA,
WITH MUCH AFFECTION
I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK.



PREFACE

THE addresses in this volume were mostly given in S. Mark's, Philadelphia ; those on the Seven Words on Good Friday, 1897, and the greater part of the others at different Eastertides. They are reproduced from the stenographer's notes, and are intended for devotional reading or as helps to meditation, and as sermon notes for the Clergy.

As every picture needs its background, so the joys of Easter require the gloom of Good Friday to show them in their true light. Easter is not only a revelation of life, but of life from the dead ; it tells not only of the rising of our LORD, but of His resurrection from the dead. Hence this book begins with the Death on Calvary, with the last Words from the Cross as a background. These are taken as the heptachord of love ; the relation of the notes of the musical scale to their tonic and to one another being used to illustrate the relation of our LORD's Seven Words to their great key-note, Love. Each of the Words is considered

as a manifestation of some special characteristic of love.

After the Words from the Cross come the Eastertide addresses ; the first one taking up the Good Friday thought, the power of love ; and they deal with all the recorded appearances of our LORD after His resurrection, concluding with His appearance to S. Paul on the road to Damascus.

The book is the result of a remark made by a parishioner last Easter, that while the supply of devotional reading for Lent is so abundant, there are but few books which treat of Easter and the Great Forty Days. If this little book in any way helps to supply this need, I shall be more than thankful.

ALFRED G. MORTIMER.

S. MARK'S, PHILADELPHIA,
Feast of the Purification, 1898.

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THE SEVEN WORDS FROM THE CROSS.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

WE meet at the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, once more to listen to, once more to consider, those dying Words which are His legacy of love. And if we are to pass these three hours profitably, if we are to use them for the best, we need at the outset two things.

First, we need to invoke the aid of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT to enlighten our understanding, to kindle our affections, and to stimulate our will, that we may not only grasp something of the meaning of these Words of our Adorable Saviour, but also that we may be moved by them to greater love for Him, and that their fruit may be manifested in our lives.

And then, besides asking the aid of the HOLY GHOST, we ourselves must make a real effort to-day in order to concentrate our minds upon these Words of our LORD.

The hours are long, and we shall, perhaps, become weary ; and in addition to the weariness and weakness which belong to our own nature, we know it is the special work of Satan to try to steal away the good seed, and to suggest to us wandering thoughts. We should, therefore, earnestly resolve that for these three hours at least we will strive against weariness and wandering thoughts —that we will listen with great attention to our **LORD'S** dying Words.

It is probably within the experience of most of you here at some time or other in your lives to have stood by the death-bed of one whom, perhaps, you loved most dearly. You remember how weak the sufferer was, how intently you leaned over to listen, so that you might not lose one word that he spoke ! In like manner, let us strive to listen now. This church is the death-chamber of **JESUS CHRIST**. There on the Cross is He Whom you ought to love best of all in this world. As He speaks to you, listen intently, that you may not lose one word, one thought of the precious legacy that falls from His Lips to-day ! Ask the **HOLY GHOST** to help you ; realise your own weakness, and resolve that you will co-operate with His grace.

The Seven Words of our **LORD** on the Cross have been likened to the diatonic scale in music. From them we may produce infinite harmonies.

For as from the seven notes of the musical scale all diatonic harmony and melody is produced, so in these Seven Words, the dying Song of the Son of God, are to be found harmonies ever new and inexhaustible, and divine melodies which by their sweetness ravish the soul.

How many thousands of sermons are preached throughout Christendom each year on these Words!—and for how many centuries has this preaching gone on! The notes of the scale are always the same; the harmonies and melodies they produce are constantly varying. So here we have always the same Words—the same “old story,” yet ever new in its power to touch the heart, to transform the life. Let us strive to-day from these seven notes to produce a harmony which may long linger in our hearts and re-echo in our lives.

In all music the key is determined by its signature. We need to know the key-note that we may consider the other notes each in relation to its key. So the Seven Words have been taken from many points of view, and considered in different lights—with a different thought as the key-note, so to speak. To-day let us take as the key-note of our Meditations a thought, a word, a light which ought to be to us the greatest—the word Love. Let us take each of the Seven Words in its relation to that tonic, that key-note, Love.

We read in the first verse of the thirteenth chapter of S. John's Gospel that when our **LORD** knew His end was near, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end," or, as some translate it, "to the uttermost." Having loved His own which were in the world, all through His **Life**, He loved them unto the end of His **Life**; He loved them to the uttermost, on the Cross. Or we may take that text in the Song of Solomon, which we find in the fourth verse of the second chapter: "His banner over me was love." Let us raise as our banner to-day, Love; for "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," and we are about to contemplate **JESUS CHRIST** laying down His **Life** for us; aye, and thinking of us even in His dying agony.

Love was the cause of creation. It was the overflow of God's love that called this world into existence, that called you and me into being. Love was the cause of the world's redemption. It was love that caused the SON of GOD at the Incarnation to leap from the Bosom of His **FATHER** into this dark world of sorrow and sin. It was love that led Him to die and so to make atonement for us on the Cross.

It is love that even now brings Him every day to our Altars in the Blessed Sacrament. It is love which is the key to the strange mystery of

GOD'Sdealings with us ; for love is the key to His providences. GOD'S relation to us is entirely a relation of love ! " He loved me, and gave Himself for me," said S. Paul—loved *me*, as though there were no other object for His love on the whole earth.

Love is the great power which rules the world. Side by side down the great stream of human life we are able to trace two supreme forces, which meet in conflict at every turn of the stream—the forces of Sin and of Love.

First, we see that tremendous and mysterious power of evil, which sooner or later touches every life, marring all that is fairest in human nature ; that poison which finds its way into the most guarded life, embittering earth's joys, wrecking man's happiness, destroying the soul's peace, always, everywhere present,—the force of Sin.

And side by side with Sin, but in sharpest contrast, moving in and out amongst the throbbing mass of humanity, there is another force, its rival, the force of Love ! Love—as beautiful as sin is loathsome, and found in every condition and relation of human life, in every state and age ; love, almost as universal as sin.

The love of the little child for its mother, as it nestles in her breast ; the love, so pure and unselfish, of the mother for her child ; the love of man and woman in holy matrimony ; the love of

friendship ; the love of the patriot for his country ; the love of the citizen for his home. Even among the criminal and outcast, love is often to be found as the one redeeming spark in the darkness of sin, the spark that gives hope of reformation,—love for something, for someone.

And these two forces are ever in conflict, constantly invading each other's domain. Sin is ever finding its way into the abode of love, sowing dissension, jealousy, envy, robbing love of its home ; or else, worse still, changing its holy flame to unhallowed lust. Sin is everywhere poisoning and crushing love in all its relations, manifesting itself in the rebellious, ungrateful child, the false friend, the unfaithful spouse.

But victory is not always on the side of sin. There are times when love invades sin's territory, overthrowing its strongholds and setting free its prisoners.

Yes, this is the key to all mission work, for it is love which sends bands of holy women and consecrated religious down into the haunts of sin, into the slums of our great cities,—bringing back the poor victims of sin, teaching them what love is, inspiring them with the hope of better things, telling them of the Precious Blood which hath power to cleanse their soiled souls, and of the Unction of the HOLY SPIRIT which cheers and strengthens man in his struggle with sin.

And these two forces of sin and love are found in conflict all the way down the stream of history, until at last they stand revealed in their utmost strength when they meet for their supreme and decisive effort on Calvary, at the Cross of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. *There* sin does its worst, and crucifies the SON of GOD; *there* love does its best, paying the penalty of sin and redeeming the human race.

We trace sin step by step down the ages, until it bursts, like a torrent in its fury, on our LORD'S devoted Head. We trace love everywhere, through all the tangled skein of human life, until it is revealed in its most splendid strength on the Cross of CHRIST.

Sin points to the Cross and boastingly says, “Behold my strength! See what I have done! I have scourged, crucified, killed all that is fairest in human nature.” And Love points to the Cross and says, “Behold and see how I conquer sin by paying its penalty! Behold how I conquer death by dying!” For love is stronger than sin, stronger than death; love is the supreme power, love is almighty, for GOD is Love.

To our short-sighted vision sin sometimes seems the stronger, especially when we perceive its ravages in ourselves; but when we trace the two forces to their origin, we can have no doubt which will win the ultimate victory. For great as is the

force of evil, its origin is finite; we trace it to a creature, the devil. But when we trace love back to its source, we find it infinite, for its source is GOD, and GOD is Love.

So let us take Love as the key-note of our Meditations to-day, and consider each Word from the Cross as a manifestation of love.

THE FIRST WORD.

“FATHER, FORGIVE THEM ; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.” *S. Luke xxiii., 34.*

THIS Word considered in the light of love gives us the first and most wide-reaching example of the fruits of love, for it shows us love manifesting itself in prayer, prayer for others, intercessory prayer.

Behold the scene ! The Cross is laid on the ground. Our Blessed LORD is stretched upon it, His Arms are extended, and the cruel nails are driven first through His Hands and then through His Feet. It was probably whilst this torture was being inflicted that the first words were spoken, and unlike the other words they were repeated again and again, for the Greek word (*ελεγε*) which is translated “ said ” is in the imperfect tense, and signifies “ He kept on saying.” As the cruel blows of the hammer drove the nails through the tender flesh and muscles, He kept on saying, “ FATHER, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.”

Intercession to be effective must be importunate ; in no prayer is greater persistence needed. There must be the earnest solicitation, the praying “ without ceasing,” without wearying, which is possible only when love is the motive power of the prayer. How soon we grow weary of prayer, especially of prayer for others ! And is not want of love often the cause of this ?

Love, and you will not find it so difficult to persevere in prayer. Surely this is one of the simple but practical lessons taught by this first Word. For our LORD not only said, “ FATHER, forgive them,” but He kept on saying it. So must we go on praying the same prayer for the same person or work, perhaps for weeks or months, or even years.

Again, no kind of prayer is so all-embracing in its subjects as Intercession. Mission work all over the world ; souls in need ; those we love, or who are bound to us by ties of relationship, whether natural or spiritual ; those for whom we are responsible ; those whom we have neglected or wronged ; those who have injured us :—for all these our LORD here teaches us to pray.

The Cross was lifted up from the ground and dropped into the hole prepared to receive it, terribly increasing our LORD’S suffering ; but He went on with His prayer, “ FATHER, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.”

All sin was gathered round Him there ; the envy and jealousy of the priests, the moral cowardice of Pilate, the callous cruelty of the executioners, the brutal and heartless curiosity of the mob. Our **LORD**, as He looked down upon the upturned faces, read in them as in hideous characters every sort of sin.

What could He do ? For three years He had gone from one end of the land to the other on missions of love, preaching to sinners ; but He could do that no longer, for His Feet were nailed to the Cross. For three years He had done works of love, laying His Hands in healing and blessing on their sick ; but His Hands were nailed to the Cross, so that now He could do that no longer.

There is one thing left ; His tongue is still free, He can pray for them. He can no longer do mission work, He can no longer go about doing works of healing ; but love, the love which burns undiminished in His Soul, finds expression in prayer. And so He prays for them.

My brethren, we are in a world of sin, and we are pledged to be followers of a crucified **LORD** ; that is, we are bound to follow His example.

What can we do for the sin of the world ? Very few of us can go out to foreign lands as missionaries to work for souls, for our feet are bound to the spot where we are. We have our obligations in life, we have the claim of family ties upon us,

we cannot go ourselves as missionaries. We cannot, perhaps, engage very much in mission work at home, because our lives are such busy lives. But we can all pray. Yes, the great duty, the great privilege, the great power, of intercessory prayer is within the reach of us all. We all of us can pray.

But why must we pray ? Not only because our LORD sets us the example, but because we realise at least partially what our LORD realised fully, as no one else ever did—the value of the human soul. From the Passion of our LORD we learn the value of the soul, for we read there the infinite price He paid to redeem mankind.

But there is even a greater revelation of the value of the soul than the Passion—for the Passion might have been only from *pity*, from the love of Compassion, as it has been called : there is a greater revelation of the soul's value in the thought that GOD *loves* the soul.

We often love things which are not worthy of our love, which disappoint, bitterly disappoint us ; and this because we are so blind, so easily deceived, because we know things and persons only as they seem, and not as they really are. But GOD cannot be deceived ; He needeth not that anyone should tell Him what is in man, for GOD created man and knows what is in him ; and yet GOD loves man, and GOD cannot love an unworthy object.

Wonderful thought ! In man, then, there must be something—in your soul, in every soul, there must be something—which is worthy of GOD's love ; and this thought should be the great stimulus of all missionary work, of all intercessory prayer. Souls that GOD loves, jewels in our LORD'S Crown, eternal, priceless, are in danger ! Now they can be reached by work and prayer ; but soon, perhaps, they may be beyond the reach of either. Is not this enough to drive you to intercessory prayer ?

Again, consider the dignity of intercessory prayer. You are members of CHRIST, and as members of His Body you are bound to join in His great work of intercession. Its dignity comes from the fact that not only does our LORD set the example of intercession, but that it is the great work of His Life in glory. In His great High Priestly prayer in the seventeenth chapter of S. John's Gospel, just before His Passion, He says, “ I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” And here, too, in this prayer upon the Cross we find Him saying, “ FATHER, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.” Thus He sets the example.

And then—marvellous thought !—not only did He pray while on earth, but now that He is reigning at the Right Hand of the FATHER in Heaven,

His one work is intercession. “ He ever liveth,” we read, “ to make intercession for us.” He, our great Head, in the glories of Heaven is interceding for souls unceasingly ; and we, struggling in this world of sin, as members of the Head must join in His great intercession. So we learn from CHRIST the dignity of intercessory prayer.

And then its efficacy ! Turn to the picture of Moses in the seventeenth chapter of Exodus. While the Israelites in the valley are fighting with Amalek, the hands of Moses are lifted in supplication, and when he grows weary, Aaron and Hur hold up his arms ; for when the arms dropped Amalek prevailed, but when the arms were held up Israel prevailed.

All over the world the Church is fighting. Missionaries in far-off lands, missionaries in this great city; missionaries in the slums, missionaries in our own parish, are struggling against the powers of evil—and on what do they depend ? Not on their own gifts, not on their own eloquence, not even on the self-sacrifice of their own love ; but they have a right to depend upon our holding up their hands by intercessory prayer.

Why do we have every day in this Church so many Services ? It is not merely for those who can come to them. If there were not one person who could come, the Priest would still be bound to say his Office every day. It is the intercessory

prayer of the Church—the holding up of the arms of her missionaries.

If we turn from the Old Testament to the New, we read in S. James' Epistle, that “ The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,” and we are reminded of Elijah, a man of like passions with ourselves, who prayed that it might not rain, and there was no rain for three years and six months ; and he prayed again, “ and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

If we turn from the Bible to our own lives, probably most of us have had blessed experiences of answered prayer ; perhaps no one so much as a Priest. He prays for a soul sometimes for years ; and how often, sooner or later, that soul comes to God ! Oh, the efficacy, the power of intercessory prayer !

Why is the Church weak to-day ? Because, amid the multiplication of organisations and agencies of work we forget the *power* of prayer. The Saints who again and again converted the world—men like S. Francis Assisi, without wisdom, without worldly influence, without wealth, and even without any great eloquence—prayed, and it was their prayer that gave them their power. It would be a good lesson for us this Holy Week, if we learnt the efficacy, the duty, and the dignity of intercessory prayer.

And, then, recollect that its neglect is really a sin, for which we shall have to answer. For we read in the twelfth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, and the twenty-third verse, that Samuel said to the people, “ GOD forbid that I should *sin* against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you.” He says that though they had behaved so badly to him and sinned so grievously against GOD, yet if he were to stop praying for them he would be sinning against the LORD.

Intercessory prayer : its dignity how high ; its efficacy how great ; and its neglect sin !

Now just a word or two about some hints for intercessory prayer. One should set apart a certain time for it, and even in addition to that, strive to use it at other times. The best time, if we can give it, is between twelve and three in the afternoon, when our LORD’s Arms were outstretched on the Cross, pleading for the world; for all intercessory prayer must be in union with the Cross of CHRIST. The best day of the week is Friday, when our LORD died for souls. We need not, of course, confine ourselves to that day or hour ; but none can be more suitable.

It would be well when we have a spare hour to take a sheet of paper and make a list of the subjects for which we feel we ought to pray ; and then each day to pray for some one or more of them.

First, going as far away from home as possible, there would be prayer for foreign missions ; then prayer for those around us who are in ignorance of GOD, blasphemers or hinderers of His Word ; and then for those who, knowing GOD, are in mortal sin,—that they may be brought to repentance. We should pray also for those who are in great temptation, on the very verge of yielding to sin and perhaps losing their souls ; for those who are working for GOD in special ways ; for the *sick*, that they may be patient ; for the *suffering*, that they may unite their sufferings to the sufferings of CHRIST, so making them meritorious. And then think often of the *dying* ; for we shall all have to die some day. It is a charitable act to say sometimes a prayer or litany for an *unknown* dying soul. Pray, too, for the *dead*, those who have died in the LORD. And lastly, pray for your own *parish* ; for your Clergy—their ministrations to you must depend very much on your prayers ; and for the various works of the parish ;—oh, the persons and things to be prayed for are indeed almost without number ! Make a list of some of them, and then, from day to day, go through that list, and, joining your prayer with the prayer of our LORD on the Cross, ask GOD to have mercy and bless these different works and persons for the sake of His dear SON our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

THE SECOND WORD.

“ VERILY I SAY UNTO THEE, TO-DAY SHALT THOU
BE WITH ME IN PARADISE.” *S. Luke*
xxiii., 43.

OUR LORD was not crucified alone. On either side of Him was a malefactor, a robber. At first, both seem to have reviled Him, but His prayer, His intercessory prayer, worked for the benefit of the soul of one,—the robber to whom tradition gives the name of Dismas,—who was converted with a wonderful penitence, and said, “LORD, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom,” and who heard the answer—not a future promise only, but a promise in the present, to-day—“To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

Here we have the second note of the scale, and we are to consider it in relation to its tonic, to its key-note, Love. If the first note showed us love manifesting itself in *prayer* for the souls of others, the second shows us love manifesting itself in *almsdeeds*, that is in *works* for the souls of others.

Our **LORD** was asked by the thief for a bare remembrance in His kingdom, but He at once gives him a share of that kingdom—the kingdom which He was to win at so great a cost. How striking and suggestive is the fact that the first to whom He promises a share in His kingdom is a penitent robber !

Who could have deserved less ? for in his own confession he said, “ We receive the due reward of our deeds ” :—we have deserved our punishment, our pain, our shame, our crucifixion—“ but this Man hath done nothing amiss ! ” And yet the Holy JESUS, filled with the consuming fire of love, having prayed for the soul of that thief—as indeed He prayed for all men—welcomes it as the first-fruits of His prayer, and bestows upon it the first share of His kingdom.

“ Remember me ! ” But were there not others who had greater claims upon His remembrance ? His mother ; S. Mary Magdalene and the other Marys, who stood at the foot of the Cross ; the Apostles, who had followed Him through His work ; and the women who had ministered to Him of their substance ? And yet the thief said, “ **LORD**, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom,” and obtained more than he asked, more than a remembrance, even a share in that kingdom for eternity.

We may notice here the clear distinction which

our **LORD** by His example draws between philanthropy and charity, between the love of men's bodies and the love of their souls. We hear in these days a great deal about philanthropy, and it is very fitting that those who know nothing of the love of **GOD**, and perhaps believe nothing in regard to the soul's future in another world, should minister to the bodies of men, of those who are in want and suffering.

But can we not afford generally to leave this kind of work almost entirely to those who are not religious people, and who therefore would not care to work for souls? They are a large, an increasingly large class; and, this being so, should not Christians, who do believe in **GOD** and the value of the soul and its eternity, spend their time and means chiefly in ministering to men's souls, and not simply to their bodies—that is, should they not minister to their bodies only as a means of reaching their souls?

When the robber said, “**LORD**, remember me,” he was suffering the intensest agony, the pains of crucifixion. What, then, ought our **LORD** to have done, according to the views of philanthropists? He should of course have had him taken down from the Cross, and his wounds staunched, and fetched a surgeon to give him an anodyne to deaden his pains:—that would have been popular philanthropy. But our **LORD** was not a philan-

thropist in that sense, and so He left him there to suffer, left him there to die ; because his sufferings were part of the payment of the penalty of his sins, and because suffering, so far from being an evil, is perhaps one of the greatest and most marvellous blessings of our life ;—that is, when we bear our pain, as the penitent thief bore his, as the due reward of our sins.

Our LORD did not take him down from the Cross. Our LORD did not by the exercise of His divine power cause his bonds to fall off. He left him there to die ; but He saved his soul. In our LORD's treatment of the penitent robber we notice the enormous difference between temporal alleviation of pain and the eternal redemption of the soul. One is philanthropy, the other is charity. The one rightly belongs to the children of this world, the other to the children of GOD.

In our consideration of the First Word from the Cross, we dwelt on some practical suggestions for intercessory prayer. Let us now briefly consider, under the Second Word, in what ways we can follow our LORD's example in manifesting our love by almsdeeds, or works for others.

It is clear that our LORD, by sharing His kingdom with a robber, sets before us the duty of sharing with others that which GOD has given us, our kingdom, that over which we have rule—

our time, our money, our gifts. It would be well for us deliberately to decide how much of each of these we can use to the glory of GOD in working for others.

First, our time. For what purpose was it given us? Certainly not exclusively for our own selfish interests. Time, for each of us, is that brief space between two eternities, the eternity when we were not, and the eternity into which we pass at our death. It is that short season in which we are to work out our salvation.

But our salvation depends not only on the negative abstinence from evil, but also on the positive fulfilment of duty ; and our great duty is to love the **LORD** our **GOD** with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourself. We ought, therefore, to consider what portion of our time we can devote to working for GOD's glory and the good of souls. In this we can certainly afford to be generous, when we consider how much time we spend selfishly on ourselves, and how much more even we waste.

Then there is the question of money; what proportion of our income can we devote to GOD's service? We should begin by realising the truth of what we often say in the Service of the Church: "All things are of Thee, O **LORD**, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

We must remember that our money is not our

own to do what we please with, without responsibility to anyone, but that in the day when the solemn words are said to us, " Give an account of thy stewardship," one of the things for which we shall have to account most strictly will be, the way in which we have used our money;—whether our gold was moulded by our almsdeeds into a crown of rejoicing, or by our selfish use of it the weight was cast which will sink us into the abyss of despair.

The proportion of income which each can devote to GOD'S service must necessarily depend to some extent upon the amount of money GOD has entrusted to his care. But we may lay down as a minimum rule that it should not be less than one tenth. This was GOD'S command to the Jew, and this the Church has required of her children. Indeed, we should consider our tithe as scarcely more than a *debt* due to GOD. Our *gifts* do not begin until after that debt has been paid.

Under this head it would be well to read prayerfully the third chapter of the Book of the Prophet Malachi, and to observe that in this prophecy GOD speaks of the neglect to pay tithes as *robbing* Him, and as the cause of the curse which at that time rested on the Jewish nation ; and He further promises a most abundant blessing if those tithes are duly paid. The words are : " Will a man rob GOD ? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say,

Wherein have we robbed Thee ? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse : for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine House, and prove Me now herewith, saith the **LORD** of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” (Verses 8, 9, 10.)

Moreover, to each of us God has given certain gifts or talents to be used in His service,—in His service, not merely for our own self-interest ; and many who can give but little in money can do much for the Church and for souls by using their gifts in Church work.

Then again, as regards the objects of our alms-deeds, we should carefully consider how we can bestow them to the best advantage, ever remembering that as stewards we must use our **LORD**’s goods not wastefully, but wisely ; and therefore we must direct our time and money and talents into such channels as shall produce the best fruits for God’s glory.

Here almost everyone would do well to seek advice from the Priest of the parish ; for no one is likely to know so well as he does the needs of his work. How clearly he often sees where a little time or strength or money would produce really wonderful results for the good of souls ! And how

often well-meaning persons, from lack of that knowledge, waste these things ! sometimes by selecting unworthy objects of their charity, and at others choosing work for which they have no aptitude.

This is especially the case in regard to their bestowal of money. How often people give to something which takes their fancy, not to that which most needs their help ! sometimes, alas, even to that which feeds their self-importance rather than to that which feeds the hungry souls in GOD's Church.

We have a most solemn warning against this in our LORD's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. What was the sin of the rich man ? It was not that he was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day ; for that belonged to his state of life as a rich man. Nor was it that he gave nothing in alms ; for as a Jew he certainly gave his tenth, and there is no reason to suppose that he did not as a rich man contribute liberally to the claims of his Church and of philanthropy. No ; his sin lay in the fact that he neglected the very work of charity which was lying at his own door ; and he neglected Lazarus, because, perhaps, he was so unattractive in his rags, so loathsome in his sores.

Very likely as he passed him day by day he went into the city and put his name down on

subscription lists for large sums of money ; and doubtless he had his own pet hobbies, to which he contributed liberally,—just as people in the present day give fortunes to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or to found a home for cats, but will not give anything to prevent the ruin and loss of souls, or to support missions in which the outcast may find indeed a home !

We are distinctly told by our **LORD** what was the result to the rich man of neglecting the work of charity at his own door. It would be well for us to consider, on a solemn occasion like this, whether we are in any danger of incurring the same condemnation.

Yes, our Blessed **LORD** in His Second Word from the Cross teaches us how lovingly He thought of the miseries of others, how wisely He ministered to the spiritual needs of the penitent robber ; and so He sets us the great example of love manifesting itself in works of charity on behalf of the needy and sinful.

THE THIRD WORD.

“ WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON ! . . . BEHOLD THY MOTHER ! ” *S. John xix., 26, 27.*

IN the First Word we saw love expressing itself in prayer for others ; in the Second, love expressing itself in almsdeeds, or work for others. In this Word we see love manifesting itself in *sympathy* for others. First, there was charity working amid sin ; then charity bringing the sinner to penitence ; and then, in the Third Word, charity amid the surroundings of home and social life.

The Bride in the Canticles, speaking of her home relations with her Bridegroom, says, “ His banner over me was love.” And surely, in all the surroundings both of the home and social circle, the love of CHRIST should constrain us. This should be our motto : “ His banner over me is love.”

We are taking the Seven Words as representing the seven notes of the diatonic scale. This Word would therefore correspond to “ the third,” one of the principal notes of the scale, by which

the mode is decided, whether it be major or minor. As in the musical scale the whole character both of the harmony and the melody depends on the third whether it be major or minor, so the influence and atmosphere of the home will often colour and change the character of the whole life.

How many lives are tinged with sadness or sorrow or sin, the result of habits acquired in childhood ! How often are imparted to after years the minor harmonies of penitential mourning, ending with the plaintive cadence of the minor mode, when the consequences to the temperament or character of the mistakes of early training remain to the very end of life !

On the other hand, how often we may trace the salutary effects of a healthy and joyous childhood in a man's ability to meet and rise superior to the difficulties and disappointments of after life ! Yes, it is not too much to say that all life's harmonies are affected by the home life of childhood.

From our LORD'S Third Word from the Cross, read in the light of love, we may learn the power of sympathy in moulding character, especially sympathy in the home life and in that social bond which we call friendship. Our Blessed LORD looks down from the Cross upon His mother and upon His friend, and though suffering so grievously Himself, He thinks of their sorrows, and by an act of generous self-sacrifice in surrendering

His mother and His friend, provides for their future happiness by binding them together with a new and hallowed bond.

The home life of JESUS—how beautiful it had been ! that home at Nazareth, over which the banner of love had been lifted—that home of poverty, in which always the spirit of love reigned—doubtless the nearest glimpse of Heaven that could be found anywhere, at any time, on this dark earth !—that home at Nazareth, where for so many years Mary and Joseph and JESUS lived together ! Think of that home when the evening sun was setting behind the hills, and JESUS and Joseph, their work in the carpenter's shop finished for the day, came home, and Mary welcomed them. And then, as JESUS sat at Mary's feet and rested His head on her knee, and Joseph looked on with love—there indeed was a glimpse of the peace and happiness of Heaven !

And why are not all Christian homes like the home of Nazareth ? It is only because love is so often absent, and in its place is found envy, jealousy, impatience, selfishness, the spirit of criticism and wilfulness, everyone wanting to have his own way ; and so the home over which the banner of love should have been lifted becomes the house, the home of strife. Charity in home life ! All those evil spirits—envy, jealousy, irritability, selfishness, self-will—flee at once before the spirit

of love ; just as the shadows of night vanish before the rising of the morning sun. Love must be the principle of home life.

But our LORD looked down from the Cross not only upon His mother—all that was left to Him of the ties of home—but also upon His friend, S. John. Next to the sacredness and sweetness of home ties come the bonds of true friendship. How unselfish it ought to be ! How mutually stimulating and strengthening ! “ Iron sharpeneth iron ; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend ” (Prov. xxvii., 17). In these words the Wise Man describes the beneficent power of friendship.

And yet, how often it is otherwise,—when friends become a temptation to one another; for how many falls can be laid at a friend’s door ! Or if there be not actually a fall, how often does friendship, instead of sharpening the characters of the friends, exercise an enervating effect on both ! What is the cause ? Always the same—want of love; that is, of true love, which is ever unselfish, and seeks not its own, but works for the good of its friend.

Our LORD looked down from the Cross on His mother and His friend, and His love showed itself in sympathy for their sorrows. He knew that they each had a cross to bear, for who has not ? Mary’s cross was the sword that pierced her soul

as she saw her Son dying ; and S. John's—think of his cross, as he saw the best Friend that ever man had passing away from him ! They each had a heavy cross to bear.

Our LORD spoke to them, expressing His sympathy, and by the unselfish command with which He sent them from the Cross, He bound them together with a new bond. To His mother He said: “Behold thy son ! I am taken away from thee ; I know the wound in thy broken heart. My friend will strive in some measure to minister to thee, and to bind up that aching wound.” And to His friend He says: “Thou art losing One Who is dearest to thee of all in life. I give thee in My place her who is dearest to Me, My mother, to be thy mother, thy comfort and strength.” What a wonderful manifestation of unselfish love !

But what is love ? The most unselfish of all virtues, for it is the outpouring of self upon another. In its highest sense, all love must be for GOD, since our love for our neighbour is but the result of our love for GOD.

And what is this love of GOD, this charity, which is the spring and source of all love ? Considered theologically, as inhering in our souls, it is called Sanctifying Grace.

Every Sacrament conveys two sorts of grace. The first is the grace of the Sacrament, that is, the particular grace which is the end or purpose

of that Sacrament, and which can be obtained, so far as we know, in no other way. Thus, the grace of the Sacrament of Baptism is Regeneration ; of Penance, it is Absolution ; of Confirmation, the Gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT ; and so on. But besides this, each Sacrament alike conveys an increase of sanctifying grace, and sanctifying grace is the love of GOD in the soul.

Sanctifying grace is a quality inherent in the soul, a "habit" which remains in the soul until destroyed by mortal sin. It is, as it were, "the wedding garment" of the soul.

Where sanctifying grace in its fulness inheres in a soul, there it is impossible for anything but love to exist. You cannot have heat and cold in the same place at the same time. You cannot have light and darkness in the same room at the same time. You cannot have love and hatred in the same heart.

S. John writes so emphatically in his First Epistle that he almost startles us by the seeming passion with which he says, "If a man say, I love GOD, and hateth his brother, he is a liar" (1 S. John iv., 20). Yet this is true, absolutely true.

If a man say that he loves GOD, that he has sanctifying grace in his soul, and really hates his brother with a mortal hatred, he proves that he is self-deceived, he proves that the love of GOD which he thought was in his soul is not there ;

for you cannot love GOD without loving GOD's creatures. You cannot have sanctifying grace inherent in your soul as the habit of your spiritual life, as the garment of your soul, without its pervading every action that you do, and causing a manifestation of love and joy and all the Fruits of the HOLY SPIRIT towards those with whom you come in contact.

So you see that if your home is not the abode of love it is not because you do not love one another,—that is only a secondary cause ; it is really because you do not love GOD. You cannot love GOD without loving one another.

When our LORD says, “Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”—He does not mean that they are really two commandments ; for the second is only the result of the first.

Love that is in your heart must shine forth upon all around you. You cannot bring a light into your chamber without its dispersing the darkness there. You cannot have heat in your room without its driving out the cold. You cannot have love in your heart without its pervading your actions, making you gentle, kind, and full of sympathy for those with whom you live.

It has been said that the home is the strength of the nation. Certainly in most cases home influence leaves its impression upon the character throughout life ; but the influence of home life, if it is to be for good, must be the influence of love, the influence of a home where the motto is, “ His banner over me is love.”

Our **LORD** in His Third Word on the Cross (the third in the diatonic scale) shows us that it is not enough to have love in our prayers and in our almsdeeds, but that we must have love in our home life, true love in our friendships, bringing peace and joy to all. So our **LORD**’s love of His blessed mother and of S. John manifests itself in the precious legacy of these words, in which He sympathises with their sorrows and provides for their happiness in the future.

THE FOURTH WORD.

“MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN
ME?” *S. Mark xv., 34.*

LOVE triumphing over despondency! “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”—despondency; “*My God, My God!*”—love triumphing over the despondency.

Who is there among us who has not at one time or another felt the bitterness of despondency, of spiritual depression? And yet this like all temptations, if it be rightly used, will be made a help instead of a hindrance to our spiritual life. For the true use of depression surely is this, to drive us to God. When all else fails, when the world forsakes us, when those who ought to help us turn away from us,—then our despondency must not lead us to despair, but rather it must drive us to say, “*My God, my God!*”

“Put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man,” for you will be disappointed. Put your trust in God, and He will never fail you. *In Te Domine speravi; non confundar in æternum—* “O LORD, in Thee have I trusted; I shall never be confounded!”

Then, too, there are times when depression teaches us valuable lessons. For if we use it aright it teaches us three most important things : a knowledge of self, a knowledge of the world, and a knowledge of GOD.

(1) It teaches us to know ourselves. It shows us how mistaken we have been about ourselves. For we are constantly waking up to our own sinfulness—those of us, at least, who are thoroughly in earnest and who are striving to press forward in the service of GOD—“ I thought I had made such progress ; that terrible failure in spiritual life shows me I had not. I thought I did so much for GOD ; and a flash of God’s light showed me that I did most of it for myself.”

When we feel depressed and low-spirited we are not likely to take a very high estimate of ourselves ; and it is only when we have reached the very bottom of ourselves, and learned how little good and how much evil there is in us, that our spiritual life is on a firm foundation. Despondency teaches us our weakness : “ I thought I was so strong in that particular virtue ; I failed in it. I thought I had that spiritual gift, and that was just the one I really lacked ! ”

(2) But not only does despondency teach us a knowledge of self ; it teaches us rightly to know the world, and to realise how utterly worthless it all is. The great instance of despondency in

the Old Testament is, of course, Elijah. He had called upon GOD to witness to the truth of his mission by sending down fire from Heaven to consume the sacrifice on Mount Carmel, and GOD had answered his prayer. Elijah had slain the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and apparently had won a complete victory over idolatry in the land.

And then it was, after this glorious triumph, that he gave way to despondency. A message was brought him from Jezebel that she would have his life ; he fled into the wilderness, threw himself down under a juniper-tree : “ and he requested for himself that he might die ; and said, It is enough ; now, O LORD, take away my life ; for I am not better than my fathers.” Like a flash he saw how worthless were the triumphs of the world.

So we, too, in time of depression learn to estimate the world at its true value and to distrust it. The world praises us, flatters us, ministers to us up to a certain point and so long as we are useful to it ; but then it drops us. When we feel low-spirited we not only learn our own weakness, but we learn the world’s utter worthlessness. Who ever trusted in the world without sooner or later learning its insincerity, its utter nothingness ?

(3) Moreover, despondency gives us a knowledge of GOD. For when we are depressed, to

whom can we go but to GOD? So was it with Elijah. When he threw himself down under the tree and requested for himself that he might die, GOD did not forsake him, but sent His angel to minister to him.

So in times of despondency must we turn to GOD and say, "My GOD, my GOD, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and then go on to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him! My GOD, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me!" Despondency reveals to us our own weakness, the world's worthlessness, and GOD'S eternal love.

Yes; and love is the only remedy for despondency. When you have failed in something on which you had set your heart, and are utterly cast down, try and analyse the cause of your despondency. You will generally find that it comes from one of three things.

First, very often the despondency is *physical*. The body has been overworked; the nerves have been overstrained; there is a reaction. It was so with Elijah. He had stood all that day on Carmel, displaying splendid courage; then "he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." Afterwards came his long flight into the wilderness; and so his body was worn out with the labour, and his overstrung nerves reacted from the tremendous strain which

had been put upon them, and his depression was intense.

Very often our despondency is physical. When this is so, let us remember that the remedy is a very humble and very simple one—food and rest. GOD sent His angel to Elijah with food—a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water. Elijah rose and ate, and lay down and slept. He fed his body and rested it. The physical despondency departed, and he went in the strength of that food and rest forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the Mount of GOD.

Secondly, despondency often comes from our *temperament*. Depression belongs, of course, peculiarly to the melancholic temperament ; but it is found to some extent in all temperaments, and next to the melancholic, strange as it may seem, it is most often manifested in the sanguine. The sanguine man always has his fits of despondency. If you know that you are subject to fits of depression, when you are low-spirited remember it is only a part of your temperament, and a thing which will pass away.

Thirdly—and this is, perhaps, the most important point for our consideration to-day—despondency is often the result of *disappointment*. It comes from failure. When our best efforts end in failure, and our fondest hopes meet with disappointment, we are naturally despondent.

What is the best thing to do ? Go to the Cross of JESUS CHRIST. Let love draw you there ; and what do you see ? You see in the Cross—and we need to impress it upon ourselves—you see in the Cross the most wonderful failure that the world ever witnessed.

A life which opened with such splendid promise ; a life which was unmarred by any mistake, untainted by any sin ; a life which drew the attention, commanded the respect, and won the admiration of those who listened to Him—ended in the failure of the Cross. Those for whom He worked deserted Him ; those whom He loved denied, betrayed, forsook Him ; and there in the Cross of CHRIST you see the most stupendous failure the world has ever known—and yet it was that failure which redeemed the world !

The power of the Death of CHRIST has its retrospective effect, so marvellous, of undoing what in one sense cannot be undone, of unmaking the past, of reversing the most serious acts of life. For the power of the Cross is the power by which our failures, our sins, are undone, inasmuch as they are washed away.

What tremendous consequences were involved in our sins ! Yet from the Cross the Precious Blood is applied to us as individuals through penitence, our sins are undone, are washed away ! There is nothing else in the world that can undo

the past but the Blood of JESUS, the failure of the Cross,—of which S. Paul says, “The preaching of the Cross of CHRIST is to them that perish foolishness.”

But our LORD’s Passion has not only a retrospective force ; its power is also prospective, since it conveys grace for the future, and therefore *hope* for the future. From the Cross there comes pardon of all past sin; and from the Cross, too, flows that grace in the power of which all our future life should be lived.

When I am despondent, and the world has disappointed me ; when my efforts have ended in failure ; when success, which seemed within my grasp, has eluded me, I go to the Cross, and see there as in a mirror what my life ought to be—a life, perhaps, of failure in many things, but a life upon which the Blood of the Passion has been sprinkled, blotting out its mistakes and sins, and giving me strength and courage, giving me light in darkness, and power to begin again.

“ My GOD, my GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” The remedy for despondency is the Cross of JESUS CHRIST. Go and kneel down before it, and ask yourself if anyone has ever failed as our LORD seemed humanly to fail, and remember that from His apparent failure sprang the greatest success the world has ever known ; and learn from this that the “ failures ” of your life may be

its greatest blessings, and that the “successes” of your life may prove its ruin.

Learn that in the Cross there is a mirror in which you ought to be able to see yourself reflected ; and if as you kneel before the Cross you perceive in yourself no signs of crucifixion, then be sure there must be something wrong in your life.

On the octave of Easter Day S. Thomas said, “ Except I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, . . . I will not believe.” And unless you see in your own life the marks of the Cross, you have great reason to doubt whether you are a true follower of the Crucified. If you know nothing of self-sacrifice for the love of CHRIST, nothing of struggle, nothing of failure, nothing of disappointment for the love of CHRIST ; if the marks of the Cross are not in your hands, in your feet,—then you are probably not a true follower of the Crucified.

The world wears the Cross in jewelled form. The woman of fashion wears it covered with sparkling diamonds as an ornament upon her breast ; but it is the Cross which has been burnt into our lives that proves us to be the followers of CHRIST. The jewelled Cross is the true emblem of the world’s religion ; the Cross in the life is the emblem of the Christian’s.

When you suffer most from despondency ; when

you not only fail as regards the world, but seem to have failed, perhaps, even in your spiritual life ; when your prayers seem cold, your Communions lifeless, and GOD appears to have withdrawn Himself from you ; then go and kneel before the Cross, and say, "*My God, my God, though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee ! My God, my God, under the shadow of Thy wings shall be my refuge, until this tyranny be overpast !* O my GOD, the eloquent lips of Thy Wounds tell me of all Thy love for me, and Thy love for me enables me to trust Thee in spite of my despondency. Like Elijah I will arise in the strength of the Bread of Heaven, the Holy Communion, and go on with my journey ; and in the power of Thy love I shall be able to meet my difficulties and conquer them."

THE FIFTH WORD.

“I THIRST.” *S. John xix., 28.*

THE thirst of the body, how terrible it sometimes is ! The fevered sufferer tossing upon the bed of sickness, moaning, “ I am so thirsty,”—the drunkard, who by indulgence in stimulants has immensely increased his thirst, and who cannot satisfy it,—the shipwrecked sailor in a little boat, without water,—all tell us that the most terrible of all the appetites of the body, when unsatisfied, is the appetite of thirst. Hunger is terrible, but hunger can be endured far more easily than thirst.

And is the thirst of the soul less terrible, less intense ?—that craving which GOD Himself has put into our souls ? The craving for what ? The craving to know—the thirst of curiosity. The craving to love—the thirst of passion. The craving to have—the thirst for possession.

This Word is the fifth note in the diatonic scale of our LORD’S Passion ; and the fifth is the “dominant” of the musical scale, so called from its importance in relation to the tonic or key-note. And

our LORD's Fifth Word surely suggests the question, What is the *dominant* passion of our soul ? What is the ruling principle of our life ? For what is it that we thirst ?

We thirst to know—to know what ? Is it to know what the world can teach us of sin ? We thirst to love—to love what ? What the world can give us of creatures—creatures that disappoint, and die, and pass away ? We thirst to possess—to possess what ? The money that the world can bestow, which we must leave behind us when we die ? the honours which the world can give and so quickly take away ?

Or we thirst to know,—what ? GOD'S truth, which alone can satisfy the intellect ? We thirst to love,—what ? The most perfect Man that ever lived, our LORD JESUS CHRIST ? We thirst to possess,—what ? The GOD Who gives Himself to us, and in giving Himself gives us all things ? the GOD Who created our souls with that intense thirst that He might gratify it ?—as S. Augustine says, “Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart knoweth no rest until it rests in Thee.”*

We thirst either for the Creator or for the creatures ; either for that which is eternal or for that which is temporal ; either for that which sat-

* “Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te.”—*S. Aug. Conf.*, i., 1.

isfies or for that which only stimulates our insatiable thirst without fully gratifying it.

The soul of man is thirsty. It is one of GOD's best gifts to the soul, that its thirst may impel it to seek GOD, by Whom alone the soul's thirst can be satisfied. For GOD has said, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour My SPIRIT upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring" (Isa. xliv., 3).

You, my brother or sister who are spending these three hours before the Cross of JESUS, ask yourself, For what do I thirst? You know what was the thirst of our LORD'S Life: it was to do His FATHER'S Will, to finish His work. For what do *you* thirst?

Look around you in the world, and see the various objects for which men spend their lives, for which they thirst. There is the man who thirsts to gratify his sensuality; he is a drunkard. How we pity him! He is a sensualist. How wretched after a while his life becomes even here; and oh, how awful must be his life hereafter, with all those burning passions infinitely developed in hell, but with nothing to satisfy them!

Another man thirsts for money. Covetousness; the one sin which, next to pride, is the most universal, and yet—oh strange fact!—the one sin which scarcely anyone recognises in himself.

Few persons ever make their Confession without confessing the sin of pride. Few persons who make their Confession ever confess the sin of covetousness. And yet S. Paul says, “ I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet ” (Rom. vii., 7).

Next to pride covetousness is the most universal sin. How terrible to think that in this you may be self-deceived ! You say, “ I know I am proud ; I know I have a bad temper ; I know I have a passionate nature ”; but when it comes to the Tenth Commandment, “ Thou shalt not covet ”—“ Well, no,” you say; “ I do not think I have broken that.” It is indeed sad to think how often the Devil succeeds in deceiving us, and making us believe that our love of money or money’s worth is not covetousness !

For *what* do you thirst ? There is the thirst of the sensualist. There is the thirst of the miser. There is the thirst which is said to be “ the thirst of noble souls,”—ambition ; the thirst of making a name, the thirst of power, the thirst of influence ! You say, “ I mean to use it so well ; I love to possess it ! ”

Can any of these various appetites be fully gratified in this world ? Is the sensualist satisfied ? Is the drunkard satisfied ? No, the more he strives to gratify his appetite, the more he adds fuel to the flames of the desire which is con-

suming him. Is the miser, gloating over his gold, happy and satisfied ? The miser ! From the whole vocabulary of language the word “ miser ”—“ the wretched one ”—has been chosen to describe this man, because in the eyes of all he is so *miserable*. Is the statesman happy, with his whole future trembling on a popular vote ?

Can any of these quench the thirst of their immortal souls ? You might as well ask the shipwrecked mariner, who, maddened with thirst, drinks copious draughts of sea water,—only to have his thirst terribly intensified,—whether the salt water satisfies. One has often read of men who, saved from shipwreck on a raft or boat, and suffering from the pains of thirst, in spite of warnings have drunk the sea water to quench their thirst, and then, becoming frenzied and insane, have leaped into the deep and been drowned.

From such cases as these we may surely learn the folly of those who in this life are striving to satisfy the thirst of their immortal souls by sensuality, money, or power ; who thus stimulate their thirst instead of satisfying it, and drown their immortal souls in the sea of creatures into which they plunge.

For what, then, do you thirst ? Ask yourself this question most solemnly, in the presence of the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, as you listen to that dying Word of His, “ I thirst.”

Ask yourself, What is the ruling passion of my life? Is it thirst for GOD? Nothing but that can ever satisfy me. Is it thirst for the creature? Is it sensuality in any of its forms? What is sensuality? It is the development of every evil passion in our nature, without its full gratification in this life; and these passions will be like hungry wolves yelping for food in the life to come, where there is no food for them. Think of the sensualist's hell in eternity—the hell he made for himself! Think of the thirst for money,—and the torment of the miser's hell! Think of the ambitious man with his thirst for power—bound and chained in the fetters of his sin, longing for power, but impotent, powerless!

The saint of GOD, who thirsts for the glory of GOD, thirsts to work in saving souls for his GOD—what is his reward? In this world a life of true satisfaction, for he drinks in as from a river streams of pleasure, and finds the grace of GOD springing up in him like a well of living water; and in the life to come, he will drink in the Vision of the Glory of GOD in Heaven, and join with those souls whom he has helped to save, in singing GOD's praises through the endless ages of eternity, happy with a happiness that no human tongue can describe, and no human mind can fully conceive!

What is your ruling passion? For what do

you thirst? What is the "dominant" of your life? What do you think of day after day? For what do you make sacrifices? You "rise early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness,"—and for what? To make money? To gain power? Or is it for the glory of God?

For what does the true Christian thirst? Chiefly for three things: though the three are really but one.

(1) GOD is the first object of the Christian's thirst. "O GOD, Thou art my GOD: early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee." "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O GOD. O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou LORD of hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing" for the living GOD. Thirst for GOD! GOD made the soul thirsty that He and He alone might satisfy that thirst.

The passion of curiosity which spurs men on to learn can be perfectly satisfied only with the knowledge of truth—the knowledge of *GOD* and His revelation. The passion of love, the strongest of all passions, can be perfectly satisfied only with the love of *GOD*. The passion of having, the strange craving of which I have spoken, the passion of possessing, whence did it come? GOD put it into the soul when He made the soul, because He meant to satisfy it. GOD meant you to possess—what? Nothing less than Himself!

The passion of possessing *GOD*! “ *GOD*, Thou art my *GOD*! Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me! The *LORD* is my Light and my Salvation; whom then shall I fear? the *LORD* is the Strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid? ”

The thirst of the soul is satisfied only with *GOD*. Ask the drunkard, ask the sensualist, ask the miser, ask the statesman, “ Are you happy? ”

Ask the saint, who has given up all for *GOD*, “ Are you happy? ” “ Happy! ” he replies; “ words cannot tell the sweetness of possessing *GOD*; and happy as I am in this life, I know it is but a slight foretaste of the infinite happiness of the life to come.”

Ask the sensualist, the miser, the statesman, what he thinks about the life to come,—what he expects to find there. “ Oh, perhaps there is no life to come, ” he says; “ or at least I do not wish to think of it. ” The pagan poet of old said, *Non omnis moriar*—“ I shall not wholly die. ” But the men of whom we speak will wish in vain that they could wholly die, that they might be annihilated; for they have developed in their souls a thirst which in its insatiableness will be their misery throughout eternity!

(2) And secondly, there is the thirst for *perfection*. *GOD* meant man to be perfect. *GOD* said

to Abram, in His great revelation at Mamre, “ I am the Almighty GOD ; walk before Me, and *be thou perfect* ” (Gen. xvii., 1). Man has fallen, but GOD still means him to be perfect. Our LORD said in the Sermon on the Mount, “ Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness ” (that is, after perfection) ; “ for they *shall* be filled.” It is His promise. And what is perfection ? Perhaps you say, “ Oh, I can never hope to be perfect ! I am so conscious of failure, of sin ! I must take a lower standard of conduct than perfection—much lower ! ”

But there is no standard that you can take, except the imitation of CHRIST. Our LORD said, “ Learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” If you take CHRIST as your standard, CHRIST was perfect ; and He said to you in this same Sermon on the Mount, “ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your FATHER Which is in Heaven is perfect.” Thus thirst for perfection is thirst for GOD.

(3) Then, we thirst to become like GOD. “ As for me, I will behold Thy Presence in righteousness : and when I awake up after Thy Likeness, I shall be satisfied with it ” (Ps. xvii., 16).

The soul that thirsts for perfection finds in this life a most intense interest in seeking perfection. As the man of business, or the man of science, or the statesman finds great interest in working out

his plans and reaching his goal, so the Christian finds an all-absorbing interest every day in striving after perfection, that is, in striving to be like CHRIST.

If we take a lower standard, how monotonous does spiritual life become ! But when we hunger and thirst after righteousness, then every day has a new interest, calls for a new effort to become more like CHRIST, more like GOD. And " it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is " (1 S. John iii., 2).

Moreover, this hunger and thirst after righteousness has its gratification even now in feeding upon GOD. Oh, the joy of our Communions, the satisfaction of finding our meat in doing His Will, in finishing His work ! Do we hunger and thirst for our Communions, or are they mere acts of obedience ? Do we come only because it is our rule to come, and because we are afraid to stay away ? Or do we come because we are athirst for GOD, saying, " My soul is athirst for the living GOD ; in my Communions I receive my GOD into myself " ? And then, do we thirst to do His work, to glorify Him ?

" I thirst." The fifth note of the scale of CHRIST'S Passion ; the dominant, the ruling passion, that which determines life here and life hereafter ! What is the ruling passion of my life ? Is

it the world, or is it GOD ? Is it the creatures, or is it the Creator ? Is it to satisfy my lower nature, or is it to develop my spiritual life ? Is it to get away from GOD now, or is it to dwell ever in His Presence ?

“ Blessed are they that dwell in Thy House : they will be alway praising Thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee : in whose heart are Thy ways. Who going through the vale of misery use it for a well : and the pools are filled with water. They will go from strength to strength: and unto the GOD of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion.”

This world is the vale of misery ; but if we thirst for GOD we can use it for a well, and so go on from strength to strength, until we stand before the GOD of gods in the heavenly Sion.

THE SIXTH WORD.

“ IT IS FINISHED.” *S. John xix., 30.*

THE weary hours have almost passed ; the watch by the Cross is nearly over ; and we hear our LORD’S triumph cry, “ It is finished ! ” He looked back from that watch-tower of the Cross, over all the long years, the three and thirty years of His life on earth. Before Him passed in review all the work that He had come to do, all the work that He had accomplished ; and He bore witness of it all in the words, “ It is finished.”

We are told that when GOD had finished His work of creation on the sixth day, He saw all that He had made, “ and, behold, it was very good.” So, in the new creation of grace, our LORD in the Sixth Word looks back on all that He came to do, and says of it, “ It is finished.” All is done ; all is perfect. He had accomplished His FATHER’S Will ; He had redeemed the world ; He had left the only faultless example of a perfect life. “ It is finished.”

And we, as we look back upon our life to-day,—what can we say? Can we say “It is finished”? What is finished? For some of us, the best part of our life is past; the best years of our life are gone. Our opportunities for the most part are over; we cannot bring them back, if we would.

And, then, our sins! Can we, as we look up at that dear, dying Face, with its crown of thorns, the Face of the Beloved of our soul—can we through God's infinite love take to ourselves His Words, and say of some of our sins, “They are finished; I will never do them again—never! They have been blotted out in His precious Blood; *that part of my life is finished; thank God, it is finished!*”?

Again; Lent, this Lent is finished. Has it been the best Lent of our lives? Some of you, perhaps, may be able to say, “Yes; the very best.” But with others perhaps it has been a constant fighting against God's pleadings,—the worst Lent of your life. Or, it may have been just an ordinary Lent, spent somewhat carelessly. Whatever it has been, it is finished! In a few minutes the clock will strike, and Lent will be over;—“It is finished!”

And then we shall be thinking of a grave; a grave with a stone upon it, and a seal upon the stone. Who was buried there? Our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

And what have we buried with Him ? Have we buried our sins in His grave ? Have we buried our prejudices, those prejudices which have so often held us back from following Him ? Have we buried them with CHRIST ? If so, we have laid the best foundation we could lay for the future ; and on the foundation of the mistakes and sins and wrongs of the past, buried with CHRIST, there may yet rise a fair and beautiful spiritual house, to the glory of GOD and the eternal joy of your own soul.

Can we say, you and I, as we kneel to-day before the Cross, " My past life is finished. Its mistakes, its sins, its prejudices are gone forever ; and on their ruins I will build a new life in the spirit of love " ? Love has been the key-note of all our Meditations to-day !—love in prayer, manifesting itself by praying for all the world !—love in almsgiving, manifesting itself by self-sacrifice for others !—love in family life, expressing itself through sympathy !—love in despondency, triumphing over depression !—love, the ruling passion of life, thirsting for GOD ! And now our thought is of love impelling us to build upon the ruins of the past a home for GOD in our own soul, a home where GOD may dwell with us and we with Him.

We have but a few minutes left, and must pass quickly over this Word ; but we may find a help-

ful illustration of its teaching in the history of the planet on which we live. You know that in geology we divide the history of organic life in this planet into three well-defined periods, which we call Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary ; or Palæozoic, Mesozoic, and Kainozoic.

Of these perhaps the Primary period is the most interesting and most easily studied. It began with the Laurentian rocks,—so called because they are found in perhaps their greatest area along the banks of the S. Laurence,—containing the first germ of organic life, the Eozoon Canadense, an organism so tiny that some scientists still deny that it was the product of life. For thousands of years these animalculæ went on building up the immense masses of Laurentian rock. Then came the Cambrian period, with a further development of life. The Silurian followed, with its abundance of life—in the waters, fish ; on the land, reptiles. Next came the Devonian, or Old Red Sandstone.

And then, bursting into vigour and splendour, came the Carboniferous period, when the whole world seemed like a tropical zone teeming with vegetable life. Great trees rose to the height of sixty or seventy feet, and then fell by their own weight. In the Carboniferous period the world seemed to have reached a time of productive activity which promised splendid things in the near future.

Then followed the Permian period, when all the promises seemed to have failed, and the immense productive activity of the Carboniferous period seemed to have worn itself out,—a period of volcanic action, ending with wreck and ruin, when the Carboniferous vegetation was buried, and the earth became one vast desert, almost as barren as when the Laurentian period began.

If anyone could have lived in those days, what bitter disappointment would have filled him when that teeming vegetation ended in utter barrenness, and was all buried beneath the Permian rocks ! The Permian period was like a chilly winter succeeding some glorious summer. It was like the twilight of the Palæozoic day. It was like the stubble in the field, which has to be turned under by the plough that it may make way for a new verdure.

The winter of the Permian period came ; and then—then the spring of a new age. For the Permian rocks were the foundation of the glorious world in which we live,—the ruins forming the solid foundation upon which all that we now have was to be built. But the Permian period was more than that ; for we need heat in this rapidly cooling planet of ours ; and whence do we get it ? From the coal-fields of the Carboniferous period. We dig down among the ruins of the past, beneath the Permian foundation, and bring

up the coal which supplies us now with light and heat.

So it is in our spiritual life. There are generally two great conversions of the soul. The first is the conversion of the soul to self,—when a very earthquake takes place in our nature, which reveals the hidden things of the soul, and wakes us up to a realisation of its possibilities, and we begin to live a spiritual life, largely for the happiness which that spiritual life brings ;—when the soul is absorbed in its own progress, and measures all things by the sensible delight obtained from them ;—when it loves to go and work for GOD, and make sacrifices, because all these things bring to it an increasing satisfaction.

This goes on, generally, for many years ; but gradually the satisfaction begins to wane, and the joy and sweetness of prayer passes away, and winter with its cold and frost seems to hold the soul in its icy grasp :—it is the Carboniferous period of the soul's life.

Then there comes, as it were another earthquake in our nature, and a lightning-flash of GOD's own light reveals to us a self of which we never dreamed, and we see in ourselves an insincerity which we never suspected. We learn how unreal much of our spiritual life has been ; how much that we thought was done for the glory of GOD was really for the gratification of self ; and that

the joy we experienced in prayer was not the joy of serving GOD so much as the joy which GOD bestowed upon us to encourage us in our first efforts to pray.

We see, in this new light, how we had simply shifted many of our ambitions from the sphere of the world into the sphere of the spiritual life. This is the Permian period, when much that seemed beautiful dies down, and on the ruin we slowly begin to lay the true spiritual foundations of our life.

This is the second conversion, the conversion from self to GOD. "O GOD, Thou art my GOD!" we say. "My GOD and my All, I love Thee not for Thy gifts alone, but for Thyself; and as Thou withdrawest from me the gift of sensible devotion, I desire to rest more and more in Thee alone. O GOD, send me what Thou wilt, do with me what Thou wilt, for I know Thou lovest me! Send me joy or sorrow, for Thou knowest what is best for me! Take away from me all that Thou seest to be displeasing to Thee! Send me whatever cross Thou knowest to be good for me! LORD, help me to live not for myself, but for Thee alone." My brother, have you reached this period? Have you known this second conversion?

And then, in regard to the past, you say to me, "It is finished. Is it, then, all lost? Those

sweetnesses of my first fervours, when GOD seemed so near to me, and my soul seemed to be on fire with love of Him ;—is all that lost ? ” No, none of it is lost. GOD has built up the earth as it is now for man’s habitation, and yet how much we depend upon the past ! What could we do without our coal ? All our manufactures would come to a standstill. At night-time we should be in utter darkness. All our heat and winter’s warmth would disappear.

So it is in the life of the soul. From among the ruins and mistakes of the past we find two important things.

First, we find light, which enables us to deal with the difficulties of the present in the light of past experience ; and this is no small gain. How many mistakes we made, which, now that we know that they were mistakes, we shall never make again ! Secondly, we get that which is far greater, we get heat ; for the recollections of past mercies, of sins forgiven, of mistakes which GOD has enabled us to correct, of all the blessings of the past—these are the fuel by which we keep alive in our hearts the fire of Divine love !

Being what we are by GOD’s grace, we shall not wish to forget what we were by our own sin ; and when we are discouraged by the difficulties of the present, the remembrance of GOD’s love in the past, and of all the trials and dangers through

which He guided us safely, will be the best stimulus to renewed effort.

But the past has not been all mistakes and sins. We find in it many treasures of God's love, on the remembrance of which we can feed ; many joys of Communion with Him, many answers to prayer, much spiritual happiness. And when we are in depression or trouble, we may recall these experiences, and say in the words of the Psalmist, " When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God : when my heart is vexed, I will complain. Thou holdest mine eyes waking : I am so feeble that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old : and the years that are past. I call to remembrance my song: and in the night I commune with mine own heart, and search out my spirit. Will the LORD absent Himself for ever : and will He be no more entreated ? Is His mercy clean gone for ever : and is His promise come utterly to an end for evermore ? Hath God forgotten to be gracious : and will He shut up His loving-kindness in displeasure ? And I said, It is mine own infirmity : but I will remember the years of the Right Hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the LORD : and call to mind Thy wonders of old time " (Ps. lxxvii., 3-11).

We are told in the Gospels of a woman who was a sinner,—she is now one of the greatest saints, and Churches are dedicated in her honour,—but

who did what she could in the way of penitence, for she confessed her sin before men, and washed our LORD'S feet with her tears. We are told that JESUS said of her that she loved much because her sins, which were many, were forgiven. So the recollection of GOD's forgiveness of past mistakes and past sins can be thrown, as it were, upon the fire of Divine love in our soul, to make it leap into a blaze and kindle our whole being with its flame.

The history of GOD's works, written in the book of nature, is often analogous to His work in our souls. When we reach our Permian period, and the fervour of our first conversion begins to grow cold, and the fruits which we seemed to bring forth so plentifully begin to wither, let us take courage as we remember that the twilight and even the darkness must generally come before the glorious dawn of that better day in this life, when we are more entirely GOD'S ; when we work for Him and suffer for Him quite indifferent to sensible devotion or any other such gift which He may bestow, seeking only to do His Will and so to glorify Him, and confident that in doing this we are really growing in perfection, and preparing for the final happiness of Heaven.

“ It is finished,”—my life so far. The past is gone ; I cannot recall it. So far as it was evil, I can blot out its guilt through the Blood of JESUS. But its recollections, even of sins and of mistakes,

shall only be the fuel of my love, the stimulus of my hope. Its ruins, like those of the Permian period, shall be the solid foundation on which I will build for eternity !

THE SEVENTH WORD.

“ FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT.” *S. Luke xxiii., 46.*

THE seventh and last Word of our Blessed LORD on the Cross !

It is the peculiar function of “ the seventh ” in music that, where not interrupted by a discord, it demands at once a return to the tonic, or key-note, and hence it is known as the leading note of the key. So, when our LORD utters His Seventh Word, “ *FATHER, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit,* ” the seventh carries us back at once to the key-note, the First Word of love, “ *FATHER, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.* ”

We have been drawing near to the Cross to-day that in the light of CHRIST we might see light ; and His light has been the light of love. In the light of love we have read each Word, and learned our duty in regard to Prayer, Almsgiving, Home Life, Despondency, the Ruling Passion of Life,

and New Beginnings. And now in the last Word, in the light of love, we learn the lesson of all lessons, the lesson of trust in GOD.

Our LORD, Whose life has been one long act of obedience and love, ends it with an act of trust : “FATHER, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit.” How often we need to say these words ! Not only at the hour of our death, when we commend our spirit to GOD Who gave it,—but daily, in our difficulties, in our sorrows, in our failures, in our temptations, we need to say, “FATHER, I leave it all in Thy Hands. This difficulty, out of which I cannot see the way,—Thou canst make it plain. This sorrow, which seems so crushing,—in union with the Cross of Thy dear SON it becomes a blessing. This temptation, which seems so hard to struggle against,—in the power of His Passion I know it can be conquered. FATHER, into Thy Hands I commend myself in all things. I will trust GOD, because I know that He loves me. I trust Him, because He is my FATHER, and I love Him.”

Of the Gifts of the HOLY GHOST, the second—beginning from the lowest—which we somewhat unfortunately call “true godliness,” is really filial love (*pietas*). *Pietas* is the childlike spirit of perfect trust in GOD and love for GOD, because GOD is our FATHER and therefore loves us. Our LORD said, “ Except ye be converted, and be-

come as little children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" ; and the first virtue of childhood is trustfulness. A child is not worried about the future, or anxious about providing food and raiment. It trusts its parents to supply these things. A child is not frightened in time of danger, if only its father is near. A child will follow its father through darkness, which to it is often terrible, if only it can put its hand in its father's and feel his grasp.

Next to trustfulness, and springing from it, the great virtue of childhood is obedience. A child does what it is told by its father without questioning, because it trusts its father.

So let us end our Meditations on these Words from the Cross, considered in the light of love, with this last thought : that GOD is our FATHER ; that He loves us far better than we can love ourselves ; and that we, as His children, must love Him, and therefore trust Him and obey Him in all things.

Obey Him—we must keep His Commandments ; not only some of them, but all of them. " If ye love Me," our LORD said, " keep My Commandments " (S. John xiv., 15). At the beginning of their spiritual life people sometimes make the great mistake of thinking that they will obey GOD in some things, but not in all things ; that they will keep some of His Commandments, and some of the Precepts of His Church, where they

are not too hard, but not all His Commandments, nor all the Precepts of His Church.

Our LORD said, “ If ye love Me, keep My Commandments ” ; and you say, “ Yes, but I have not strength sufficient to keep them all. Some of them are so hard, involve such sacrifices, require such self-denial ; and I am so weak ! ” Why do you say this ? Shall I tell you ? It is because you do not trust GOD. If you really trust Him you will be sure that GOD, Who is your FATHER and Who gave you the Commandments, will also give you grace to keep them.

Moreover, this lack of perfect obedience, which proceeds from want of perfect trust, also implies a lack of perfect faith. For if we believe in GOD—that He is omniscient, omnipotent, and that He loves us—we cannot but trust Him perfectly ; for His omniscience involves His knowledge of all things, and therefore He knows our needs and sorrows and trials ; that He is omnipotent proves that He is able to help us to the uttermost ; and His love assures us that He *will* help us in each difficulty, if it be for our good. If GOD is not omniscient, omnipotent, and love, He is not really GOD, but some imperfect being like ourselves.

And so we end our Meditations with this last Word,—an act of trust in GOD. When difficulty or temptation or sorrow or failure is my lot, let

me resolve to go to the Cross and listen to these Words, “ FATHER, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit ” ; and then let me take them upon my lips, and leave myself in GOD’s Hands. Let me say, “ In Thee, O LORD, have I trusted ; I shall never be confounded ! The LORD is my Light and my Salvation ; whom then shall I fear ? The LORD is the Strength of my life ; of whom then shall I be afraid ? O tarry thou the LORD’s leisure : be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart ; and put thou thy trust in the LORD.”

We cannot end our Meditations on these words to-day better than by fixing our gaze upon a scene probably unfamiliar to most people, and yet one of the most dramatic scenes in history.

On the shores of the Straits of Messina are two rocks, Scylla and Charybdis, one on either side of the straits ; and upon the rock of Scylla there was once a fortress, looking down in its mighty strength upon the swirling tide in the straits below. Go and see it to-day ; it is strangely silent. The fortress is ruined and deserted ; the only sound is the throb of the waves as they surge upon the shore.

One hundred years ago it was the scene of a terrible disaster. Calabria, as some of you perhaps know, is one of the spots where earthquakes are most frequent, and in 1783 one of the most awful earthquakes that have been known occurred upon that spot.

Ruffo, Prince of Scylla, was in the fortress, an aged and pious man who trusted in GOD ; and when shock after shock caused the fortress to quake upon its foundations, and the village beneath to tremble, the people poured out in terror to the strand, embarking in boats ; but the aged Prince determined that he would spend the last moments of his life in the chapel of the fortress, before the crucifix. He went into the chapel, and kneeling before the crucifix, waited for the end.

His thought was to die at the foot of the Cross. But presently his courtiers came and begged him to fly. " Most of the people," said they, " have reached the shore and are in the boats. It is but a little way—there is a boat waiting for thee ! Thou canst be saved if thou wilt fly ! " He listened, and reluctantly rising from his knees, was hurried to the shore and into the boat. There in boats on the strand of Scylla were some two thousand five hundred people, the entire population of the place. Presently, there was another earthquake shock, with a strange disturbance of the sea ; then boats and people were swallowed in the billows and all perished ! The fortress began to crumble ; but there still stands untouched to-day, as it stood then, the chapel with the crucifix. Had the Prince remained at the foot of the Cross, he would have been saved ! *

* *Istoria de' fenomeni del Tremoto avvenuto nelle Calabrie nell' anno 1783.* Napoli, 1784, pages 225, 226.

Can I leave with you a more helpful thought ? You and I, my brethren, will have, perhaps, many an earthquake to withstand before this life shall end, many a shock that shall cause our very nature to tremble. But when such shocks occur, whether the convulsion be mental, through doubts, or physical, in suffering and pain, or from the pressure of the world around us—whatever it be, remember that the place of safety is not on the waves of the world, but at the foot of the Cross.

In every earthquake of our nature ; in every sorrow and pain and trial ; in every difficulty, let us remember the last Word from the Cross, “ FATHER, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit,” and say, “ My GOD, in Thee have I put my trust ! Be merciful unto me, O GOD, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in Thee ; and under the shadow of Thy Wings shall be my refuge, until this tyranny be overpast.”

Kneel at the Cross beneath those outstretched Arms, those Wings under which our LORD would gather you, His children ! Look up at Him ! Learn of His love,—He died for you ! Learn of His power,—by His Death He redeemed you ! And then resolve that nothing shall draw you away from the Cross ; and say with S. Paul, “ GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST ; by Whom the world is

crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Look up at the Cross, and learn there the lesson of love and sin, two forces of life ever in conflict ; learn, too, that in the Cross love will ever triumph, and that in the Cross you will always find a haven of refuge.

EASTERTIDE ADDRESSES.

I.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

“ AND VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, THEY CAME UNTO THE SEPULCHRE AT THE RISING OF THE SUN. AND THEY SAID AMONG THEMSELVES, WHO SHALL ROLL US AWAY THE STONE FROM THE DOOR OF THE SEPULCHRE? ” *S. Mark xvi., 2, 3.*

I. COULD any sight be more pathetic?—three poor women stealing along the deserted streets of the sleeping city while it was yet dark, on the first Easter Day; three poor women bringing their gifts to the Dead, carrying with them the spices which they had prepared to anoint the Body of Him they loved.

And as they stole along in the twilight they asked one another a question, “ Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? ” Who, indeed? For not only was the stone great and too heavy for them to move, but the soldiers were watching it, so that they could not appeal to friendly hands to help them.

How hopeless seemed their quest ! And hope, we are told, is the spring of all human action. But it is not the only spring, for there is one which is stronger even than hope—love. And in the touching scene we have described, we see love triumphing over hope, love triumphing over difficulties, love triumphing over apparent impossibilities. So that, as the last thought of Good Friday was the greatness of love, the first revelation of Easter Day tells us of its power.

How wonderful is the power of love ! How absolutely without limit ! We are familiar with the phrase “hoping against hope,” but is there not something greater than this—love triumphing over despair ?

They asked one another, “Who shall roll us away the stone ?” There was no answer, yet it did not discourage or daunt them. They went on, for love knows nothing of impossibilities. It is deterred by no obstacles. How pathetic ! how unreasoning does their love seem as they carry their offerings to the Dead, when it must have seemed impossible for them to reach the Dead ! The stone, the guard, would stop them.

“Who shall roll us away the stone ?” they asked, and looking up they saw that the stone was rolled away. While S. Mark alone tells us of the question of the women, each of the Evangelists dwells on the fact that the stone was

rolled away, and S. Matthew tells us that there had been “ a great earthquake : for the Angel of the L ORD descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it ” (S. Matt. xxviii., 2).

And yet, in spite of their question and perplexity, the women seem to have taken it as a matter of course when they found the stone rolled away. It was the beginning of a day of wonders, and this, the first, does not seem even to strike them with astonishment, for love takes marvels for granted.

II. All over the world this morning in the early twilight groups of men and women might have been seen making their way through the silent streets of many and many a city. Whither were they going ? What was their errand ? What brought them out at so early an hour ? Rich and poor, high and low, all alike were seeking the Body of C HRIST.

And like the holy women, they brought the spices which they had prepared by Lenten fast and penitence, not to anoint the dead Body, but to lay at the feet of the risen C HRIST the offering of themselves, their souls and bodies ; impelled by that same power which drew the holy women to the tomb—the power of love.

But as they wended their way this morning through the silent streets, their thoughts were not,

“Who shall roll us away the stone?” for they knew it had been rolled away. Their thoughts were of a *living* **LORD**, Who should meet them upon His Altar-Throne ; and of a new tomb which they had been striving to prepare in their hearts for Him ; perhaps too of a seal and a watch—the seal of some firm resolution, the great fruits of their Lenten discipline, and the watch which they would keep lest any enemy should come to steal from their hearts the grace of their Communion.

III. And so the first Easter lives on, as Calvary lives on. But what are its lessons ? The lessons of the Resurrection are many, but surely, one thing which the rolling away of the stone teaches us is the power of hope and of love.

i. It tells first of the rolling away of the stone of *sin*. Before our **LORD** rose, on the first Easter Day, how heavy, how hopeless was the load of sin borne by the human race, weighing down the heart of every child of Adam ! “Who shall roll it away ?” had been the cry of every age, and the answer had been essayed by many a philosopher, by many a religious teacher among the heathen, and among GOD’s own people by patriarch, prophet, priest ; all in turn had tried, all had promised help, all alike had failed ! How heavy that stone had become ! How great the misery of man ! How hopeless that cry, “Who shall roll us away the stone ?” !

And now the question is answered—answered for ever. He Who rose through the sealed stone has sent His Angel to roll it away. How many of those who, like the women of old, come seeking CHRIST in the early dawn of Easter Day, could tell from their own sweet experience how GOD's Messenger had rolled away the stone of sin from their hearts and lives, bringing them the message of peace, “Thy sins are forgiven thee: go in peace”—“By CHRIST's authority committed unto me I absolve thee from all thy sins !”

And so they come not, like the women, with heavy hearts, driven by love to seek Him Whom they thought still dead,—but with joyous heart and light step they come to seek Him Who is alive for evermore, to feed upon Him, to enter into the joy of His Resurrection, as they have striven in Holy Week to enter into the fellowship of His Sufferings (Phil. iii., 10). Surely, this is the first lesson which the rolling away of the stone suggests.

ii. But there is another stone which was rolled away on Easter Day—not only the stone of sin, but of the wages of sin—*death*.

Think what death meant before CHRIST had risen from the dead!—death so dark, so gloomy, so dreadful! It is true there had been a glimmering of immortality among the heathen, but it was

only a vague hope ; a little more than this existed indeed among the Jews, but even with them it was not general, for the Sadducees believed not in any resurrection.

And so men looked forward to death as perhaps the end of all things, or at best the beginning of an unknown experience, of a dark and mysterious world beyond, where, if there were any existence, it was but shadowy and unreal.

Think of the despair with which the mother of old saw her child die, lost to her as it seemed for ever ! Think of the grief which the parting and separation of death then brought into each family ! The stone of death was indeed great and heavy—so great that men scarce dared to ask, as they did of sin, “ Who shall roll it away ? ”

But on Easter Day there came a new revelation. Death has been conquered by dying, and He Who is its Conqueror proclaims, “ I am He That liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen : and have the keys of hell and of death ” (Rev. i., 18).

And so the stone was rolled away. For when He overcame the sharpness of death, He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers ; and now, instead of being the gloomy, heavy, hopeless stone it had been, weighing upon man’s heart and mind and life, death becomes the open door which invites the poor captive to leave his prison

and enter into the glorious liberty of the endless life.

From being the extinction of man's hopes, it becomes the beginning of a new life so glorious, so happy, that the SPIRIT saith, "Blessed are the dead which die in the **LORD** from henceforth. . . . that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them" (Rev. xiv., 13).

iii. And may we not draw one more lesson from the question, "Who shall roll us away the stone?"—a lesson of encouragement in all the difficulties of life? What difficulty could have been greater, what obstacle more hopeless than that to which the women looked forward as they wended their way to the tomb? But they do not seem to have thought for one moment of stopping or going back. They went forward, and their love was rewarded, for they found the difficulty removed by an Angel hand.

So it was with GOD's people of old when they encamped at Baal-zephon on the shore of the Red Sea, and the cry arose that the Egyptians were upon them. Before the Israelites was the cruel sea,—behind them their still more cruel foes. Escape was impossible. Their case seemed hopeless. But at this crisis the word of the **LORD** came unto Moses saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" (Ex. xiv., 15). As they went forward the path was opened

for them through the surging waters, and they passed across the Red Sea on dry land.

Yes, this is the lesson of all lessons which we are taught to-day—the duty of going forward. When difficulties are in our path and there seems to be no human help, we must go forward, relying upon the help of GOD. And as the Israelites found the waters of the Red Sea rolled back before their feet, and the women found the stone rolled away from the tomb, so will the Christian who goes forward in the power of faith, hope, and love, find every difficulty yield before him.

Easter after Easter this scene is repeated, as those who love CHRIST go early on Easter morning to seek Him in the Sacrament of His love. May Easter after Easter in your lives, dear children of CHRIST, tell of greater faith, of brighter hope, of deeper love, and of the nearer approach of that glad Easter when you shall hear the welcome of your LORD, “Come, ye blessed of My FATHER, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (S. Matt. xxv., 34).

II.

THE EARTHQUAKE.

“AND, BEHOLD, THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE : FOR THE ANGEL OF THE LORD DESCENDED FROM HEAVEN, AND CAME AND ROLLED BACK THE STONE FROM THE DOOR, AND SAT UPON IT.” *S. Matt. xxviii., 2.*

IN studying the records of our LORD’S Life which we find in the four Gospels, we often notice that one Evangelist seems to have been particularly impressed by some circumstance or detail which the others pass over in silence, evidently because it did not so deeply impress them.

Our text is an illustration of this, for it is S. Matthew alone who records the strange convulsions of nature which accompanied our LORD’S Death and Resurrection.

While S. Mark and S. Luke, by mentioning the rolling away of the stone, imply that there was an earthquake at the Resurrection, S. Matthew alone actually tells us that it happened ; and he alone of all the Evangelists records the earthquake

which took place at the moment of our **LORD**'s Death, when " the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom ; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent ; and the graves were opened ; and many bodies of the Saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many " (chap. xxvii., 51-53).

I. From his mention of the earthquake on these two occasions we may surely gather that S. Matthew was very deeply impressed by it. He couples the earthquake at the Resurrection with the rolling away of the stone from the tomb by the Angel. Let us consider what lesson we may learn from this detail of the story of the Resurrection.

The earth had shuddered with horror, when our **LORD** died, at the crime which had been committed by man ; but at the time of His Resurrection the earth vibrated with joy at His victory over death. And indeed an earthquake was a fit accompaniment to our **LORD**'s Resurrection, since every resurrection seems to be associated with a commotion or upheaval of nature.

i. For we are distinctly told that there was an earthquake at our **LORD**'s Resurrection. And all the Evangelists, in recording our **LORD**'s great prophecy in regard to the Last Day, tell us that at the General Resurrection there will be great

disturbances of the powers of nature, which shall, as it were, herald the approach of our LORD to judge the risen dead. And in S. John's Vision recorded in the Revelation we read : " The seventh Angel poured out his vial into the air ; and there came a great voice out of the temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings ; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great " (chap. xvi., 17, 18).

ii. A similar occurrence may be observed in the life of man, that is, in the spiritual resurrection of the sinner. For when a man in penitence first turns from sin and is converted to GOD, he generally experiences an intense struggle, the birth-pains, as it were, of a new life. There is an earthquake, as it were—an upheaval of his whole nature.

The effort to repent requires an intense struggle ; the energy needed to cast out the evil that is in him, to break loose from the bonds of sin which hold him back from GOD, to give up once and for all much that has been pleasant in his past life, to accept the humiliation which is necessary to secure assurance of pardon through that Absolution which frees the sinner from his bondage ;—all this implies a very earthquake in the sinner's nature. And this earthquake, like that of which we are

told on Easter Day, is followed by joyous calm, and is the prelude of a glorious peace.

Who is there who, on looking back upon the time when he first really gave himself to GOD, cannot recall this experience? It seemed so difficult to make the necessary sacrifices,—indeed, it appeared to be almost impossible! All the powers of his nature seemed out of course.

But when by the help of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT he had made his first great act of repentance, there was a calm, a peace, a joy of which the first Easter Day is a fitting type, and which was in itself a foretaste of that great Easter Day of eternal peace, when the risen saint shall enter into the fulness of the joy of his LORD.

II. But while an earthquake may accompany each resurrection from the dead—whether it be that spiritual resurrection from sin which takes place in this life or that resurrection to glory which belongs to the life to come—we must bear in mind that a resurrection is always a manifestation of GOD'S own power, and always bears witness to His agency.

Our LORD, being GOD (as we must ever remember), rose again *by His own power*, so that He needed no Angel to roll back the stone; indeed He had risen before the stone was rolled back, for He rose through the sealed stone. He foretold this of Himself in the allegory of the Good Shepherd,

when, speaking of the way in which the Good Shepherd laid down His Life for His sheep, He said, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

And S. Peter, in his first speech on the Day of Pentecost, directs attention to this Divine power of our Blessed LORD, when he says: "Whom GOD hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." Our LORD could not be holden by death, because He is GOD.

Every resurrection, then, is a manifestation of GOD'S power, for no man can raise himself from a state of death, whether it be physical or spiritual.

As we study our LORD'S miracles of raising the dead we notice this in every case. It is JESUS who says to the maiden, "Talitha, cumi; . . . Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." It is He Who at the gates of Nain says to the dead man carried out to be buried, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." It is our LORD'S power that penetrates the tomb at Bethany, when He cries with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

And the same is true not only of resurrection from physical death, but also of resurrection from spiritual death. It is GOD alone Who can forgive sin. The scribes were right, therefore, when they asked, "Who can forgive sins but GOD

only?" But they were wrong when they refused to recognise that CHRIST was GOD.

And we may trace the same law everywhere in the kingdoms both of nature and grace.

Many years ago men thought that they had discovered what they called "spontaneous generation," that is, the power of dead matter of itself to generate life. But numberless experiments made since then by eminent scientists have shown that this was entirely erroneous, and that only life can produce life.

The sinner who is dead in sin has no more power of himself to rise from his sin than the man who has paid the penalty of nature by death has power to return to life.

But the sinner can do something ; he can yield himself to the promptings of grace, and co-operate with GOD ; but the first motions of grace in his dead soul must come from GOD. The HOLY SPIRIT, Who is the LORD and Life-Giver, must first kindle in him the spark of spiritual life which afterwards enables the man to rise from the death of sin.

III. Again, we may observe that though our LORD needed no Angel to roll away the stone from His tomb in order that He might rise—for He had risen before the Angel removed the stone—yet it was absolutely necessary, in order that His Disciples and followers might know that He

was risen, that the stone should be removed and the emptiness of the tomb revealed.

The sending of the Angel, therefore, to roll away the stone, was for the sake of those who came seeking our LORD'S dead Body on Easter Day. It was to them an assurance that He had risen ; for the Angel not only rolled away the stone, but announced the fact, " He is not here : for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the LORD lay."

Have we not in all these circumstances of our LORD'S Resurrection a striking analogy to GOD'S method of dealing with man in raising him from the state of sin to the life of righteousness ?

i. The first motions of spiritual resurrection, as we have pointed out, must come from GOD, must be the operation of the HOLY GHOST in the sinner's soul. And the man's will must co-operate with these impulses of grace. But something more than this is needed to prevent self-deception on the one hand or despondency on the other.

Most men know how little they can really trust their own subjective feelings. The work of penitence may be real ; a man may have corresponded to grace and made a perfect act of contrition, such as would be sufficient to ensure his forgiveness and (therefore) his spiritual resurrection ; but, on the other hand, he may be deceiving himself all the

time, and mistaking his own easy-going forgiveness of self for God's forgiveness of sin.

To meet this danger God has willed that man should have something more than his own self-assurance on which to depend for his hope of pardon, and has instituted in His Church the sacramental power of Absolution ; He " hath given power, and commandment, to His Ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins." That is, He has sent the Priests of His Church as His ambassadors or messengers (*ἄγγελοι*) to roll away the stone of sin through the power of Absolution, in order that men may have not only their own subjective feelings to which to trust for their forgiveness, but the objective proof of God's pardon, conveyed by the lips of His appointed representative.

ii. For as the women at the tomb *heard* the words of the Angel, " He is not here, for He is risen ; come, see the place where the **LORD** lay " ; so the sinner hears from God's messenger the words : " By His authority, committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins ; in the name of the **FATHER**, and of the **SON**, and of the **HOLY GHOST**. Amen."

The one thing on which our salvation ultimately depends is whether we are in a state of grace or in a state of sin ; and it is surely impossible to ex-

aggerate the importance—not only to our peace of mind, but to our spiritual life—of possessing some *assurance* in regard to this fact.

Our Prayer-Book uses the word “assure” twice; once in its definition of a Sacrament, which is “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us; ordained by CHRIST Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to *assure* us thereof.” The other place is in the Prayer of Thanksgiving after Communion, where it says that GOD does “*assure us*” of His favour and goodness towards us by vouchsafing to feed us with His Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

So that it is not too much to say that if we follow the teaching of the Prayer-Book, the only “assurance” which it recognises is that *objective* assurance which is given us through the use of a Sacrament; and it was to provide us with just such an assurance that our LORD instituted the Sacraments of His Church.

iii. To neglect the use of Absolution is like standing outside our LORD’S tomb with the stone still on it, and hoping that He has risen, but refusing to allow the Angel to roll away the stone, that our hope may be changed into certainty.

How thankful we should be for the fountain opened for sin in CHRIST’S Church, in which we may wash and be clean,—the Fountain of the

Precious Blood ! How grateful we should be for the ministry of Absolution which has been committed to the Priesthood of CHRIST'S Church !

And how reverently and carefully we should use that means of grace, which our LORD bought for us at the price of His own Life, and bestowed upon His Church immediately after He had risen, typifying it by the rolling away of the stone, and actually conveying the power to His Ministers in those first words which He spoke to them collectively, when, " He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the HOLY GHOST : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained " (S. John xx., 22, 23).

III.

THE VISION OF ANGELS.

“AND CERTAIN WOMEN ALSO OF OUR COMPANY
MADE US ASTONISHED, WHICH WERE EARLY
AT THE SEPULCHRE ; AND WHEN THEY
FOUND NOT HIS BODY, THEY CAME, SAYING,
THAT THEY HAD ALSO SEEN A VISION OF
ANGELS, WHICH SAID THAT HE WAS ALIVE.”
S. Luke xxiv., 22, 23.

THE Bible, from the first book of the Old
Testament to the last of the New, is a reve-
lation of the existence and ministrations of
Angels. Again and again they are mentioned
not as something extraordinary, but as something
most natural. We find them at GOD’s command
guarding the gate of Eden. We find them sent as
GOD’s messengers to the Patriarchs and Prophets.
And the New Testament opens with the ministry
of Angels. Gabriel appears to Zacharias to foretell
the birth of S. John the Baptist, and to the
Blessed Virgin to announce to her the Mystery of
the Incarnation. An Angel reveals that Mystery

to S. Joseph ; another Angel heralds it to the shepherds ; an Angel warns S. Joseph to flee into Egypt ; Angels minister to our LORD in His temptation and in His agony in the garden ; Angels are found at the sepulchre after the Resurrection ; and Angels speak to the Apostles after the Ascension.

And while they are thus recognised from first to last throughout the Bible, we observe that in the New Testament the special Evangelist of the Angels is S. Luke, who mentions their appearance much more frequently than any of the other writers, and seems to have written as though he lived in a conscious fellowship with the unseen world.

I. And is not the unseen world all around us and most intimately bound up with our daily life and is not this the only question : whether we have the spiritual faculty to observe this ? For the fact that the Angels succour and defend us on earth remains the same, whether we realise it or not.

i. If we turn to the striking incident in the Second Book of the Kings, where the army of the King of Syria surrounds Dothan by night for the purpose of capturing the prophet Elisha, we read that when the servant of Elisha, who had risen early, had gone forth, he discovered the host compassing the city, and in despair said to

his master, “Alas, how shall we do?” And Elisha encouraged him by saying, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (2 Kings vi., 14-18).

We must bear in mind that the opening of the young man’s eyes did not bring the Angels to Elisha’s succour; they were there before. Elisha had spiritual sight enough to recognise them, and by his prayer gained this gift for his servant.

ii. How many things there are all round us, interwoven, as it were, with the most ordinary actions of our daily life, of which we are ignorant only because of the dulness of our sight or hearing! And while this is especially true of spiritual things, it is also true of material things, and, perhaps, may be best illustrated from the phenomena of nature.

How many sights and sounds there are around us in the world, of which we are not cognisant at all! And of those which are within the reach of human ken, how many more are perceived by some men than by others! The uncultured savage, as we call him, has the faculties of sight and hearing trained to a degree of intensity which we

can scarcely understand ; and there are other creatures among the lower animals, whose senses are even keener than his.

II. Let us illustrate this by the consideration of some well-known laws of sight and sound. We speak of five senses, although a few moments' thought will show us that we really have but one, the sense of touch, and that all the others are but different modes of that one sense.

We are now concerned only with sight and sound. The former is but the registration, upon the retina of the eye, of the vibrations of the luminiferous ether ; while in the case of sound the drum of the ear performs a similar office in regard to the pulsations of the atmosphere.

i. For instance, if we examine the laws of colour, we find that the sensation of scarlet requires that 477 billion pulsations of the ether should touch the retina every second ; and as the vibrations become more rapid, and the light-waves therefore become smaller, other colours are produced, till we reach 700 billions of vibrations a second, which causes in our organ of sight the effect of violet.

Between these two extremes lie all the shades of colour of which we have any cognisance ; that is, the human eye is so constructed as only to let in, so to speak, vibrations between the limits of 477 and 700 billions.

It is quite evident, of course, that there must be colours, or at least vibrations, less in number than the lower limit, and greater than the higher, and yet of these we have no perception whatever, that is, they produce no effect upon the optic nerve.

What is true of colour is true of all phenomena. There may be beings floating about in the air, which we do not see simply because of the incapacity of our visual organs. And we know there are creatures lower in the order of creation, which have far greater powers of vision than we possess. Eagles, for instance, can see objects at a distance which is far beyond the reach of the human eye; and it has been shown by experiments that ants see distinctly rays of light whose rate of vibration exceeds 789 billions a second, and they therefore see colours beyond the violet rays of the spectrum. So that probably there is all about us a vision of magnificent colours to which we are quite insensible.

ii. If we now take up in the same way the laws of sound, Professor Tyndall explains to us that notes above or below a certain pitch are quite inaudible to the human ear, even though the air be filled with them. He tells us that Savart fixed the lower limit at 8 vibrations a second and the upper limit of hearing at 24,000 vibrations a second. Helmholtz, however, in his experiments, fixed the lower limit at 16 vibrations and the

higher at 38,000 vibrations a second, and this is generally considered accurate.

If, then, we start from the note 16, and multiply continually by 2 eleven times, we shall find that at eleven octaves above the fundamental note the number of vibrations will be 32,768 ; so that the limit assigned by Helmholtz allows the human ear a range of about eleven octaves.

All the notes within these limits cannot, however, be employed in music, the practical range of musical sounds being included between 40 and 4000 vibrations a second, which amounts in round numbers to seven octaves ; the lowest tone of the orchestral instruments being the E of the double bass, with $41\frac{1}{4}$ vibrations a second, and the highest probably the D of the piccolo flute, with 4752 vibrations. In some countries there is a difference in the pitch of these notes, but approximately we may accept Helmholtz's statement.

Then again, the limits of hearing are so different in different persons, and the sudden transition from perfect hearing to total want of sound perception is very striking. Sir John Herschel and Dr. Wollaston, who have especially experimented in this, say that as regards the sharp sounds produced, for instance, by a very small organ-pipe, some people will complain of the penetrating shrillness of a sound which others do

not hear at all ; and that even those of most acute hearing pass, as it were, at one step into absolute deafness. That is, they hear these shrill notes with most penetrating distinctness, until at last one is struck which is beyond the limit of their hearing, and they would maintain of that note that there was no sound at all, though another with still more acute hearing would hear it perfectly.

Professor Tyndall refers to a case of limited hearing noticed by himself in crossing the Wengern Alp in company with a friend. “ The grass at each side of the path swarmed with insects, which, to me, rent the air with their shrill chirruping. My friend heard nothing of this, the insect-music lying beyond his limit of audition.”¹

An examination of the laws of physical sight and sound shows us how much is going on all round us of which we know nothing, of which some other men may know but little more than we do, and some of the lower creatures a great deal more than we do. If this is true—and no one can reasonably doubt it—in regard to material things, how much more may it not be true of spiritual things !

The scene at Dothan, where Elisha saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire, shows us how close to us are the angelic hosts. Elisha

¹ *On Sound*, p. 101.

saw them with his spiritual sight ; the young man did not see them until his spiritual sight had been strengthened by Elisha's prayer.

III. So in regard to the spiritual world ; the Saints have seen many sights, have heard many sounds of which sinners knew nothing. While it would not be wise, and it certainly is not necessary, to believe *all* the visions that are recorded in the lives of various Saints, yet it would be a very rash thing to say that they were none of them real.

i. It would be altogether contrary to the laws of evidence to reject the testimony of one very large class of persons, whose experience extended over many centuries, and who, from their special training and sanctity, were peculiarly fitted to see spiritual things, just because those who had not gone through the same training, but on the contrary had lived a life which necessarily blunted their spiritual perceptions, had had no experience of such visions.

We accept scientific truth in regard to material things almost entirely on the testimony of scientific experts. Very few amongst us have had the scientific training necessary to investigate for ourselves the so-called laws of nature. We realise this, and therefore do not hesitate to accept them on the testimony of those who have spent their lives in such investigations, and who

have been peculiarly fitted for them by special training.

How unreasonable we should be thought if we were to reject, for instance, the physical laws of sight and sound because the great majority of mankind had never made any experiments on them, could not see the luminiferous ether, could not measure the light-waves, and had never made any experiments in acoustics !

But it would be just as unreasonable to reject the testimony of thousands of Saints in regard to visions of spiritual things which they have experienced, simply because the majority, who are not Saints and have never trained their spiritual faculties,—but rather have blunted them by a life of worldliness, perhaps of sin,—have experienced no such visions.

It is quite possible that some might think it a sufficient answer to this if they said that the evidence on which the visions of the Saints rested was not supported by any testimony of real weight. As our argument is addressed to Christians only, it would, perhaps, be sufficient to reply, that it is supported on the testimony of the inspired Word of GOD, which is the very same testimony on which rest all the doctrines of the Christian Faith.

ii. It does not seem to have occurred to some people that from the first book of the Bible to the

last we are constantly assured that holy men of GOD had visions of the spiritual world. We may begin with the Book of Genesis, in which we are told of the visions which Abram had, and we can end with the Revelation of S. John.

We also find that these visions almost invariably were experienced by *holy* people, men of GOD ; and it is distinctly implied that others did not see them, as in the example we have already quoted, that of Elisha's servant.

So that when we are told that the holy women saw a vision of Angels, the statement is one which would seem most natural.

If we read the accounts, which are common to all the Evangelists, of the appearance of the Angels to the women at the tomb, we can scarcely fail to be struck with the way in which the women seem to have taken the angelic appearance as a matter of course. For though they were frightened, they listened to what the Angels said, and spoke to the Angels in the most natural way.

Perhaps it was because they had seen such sights lately at the Crucifixion that nothing could now astonish them. Or it may have been that they had been living so near to our LORD in sanctity that they had for some time been cognisant of the angelic world around them.

This is the more likely when we consider what

had been their immediate and peculiar preparation for this vision of Angels.

IV. There had been, first, a preparation of penitence. Sin itself dims our spiritual sight, coming between us and GOD, the Saints, and the Angels, as the clouds sometimes come between us and the sun, hiding it from our eyes.

They had kept Good Friday as perhaps no one else ever kept Good Friday. They had stood at the foot of the very Cross of our Blessed LORD and had watched Him die. They had listened to and treasured up His last Words, His dying legacy of love.

They had seen in His Passion the result of all sin, of their sin. They had repented—oh, with what contrition ! The eye of the soul had been closed by sin, but by penitence the hindrances to its vision had been removed.

And then, if they had kept Good Friday as a day of penitence, doubtless they had kept Holy Saturday as a day of prayer. Good Friday had been a trial indeed to their faith, Holy Saturday to their hope. Then early on Easter morning love had drawn them to the tomb with their spices. Penitence, faith, hope, and love—what preparation could have been better for a heavenly vision ?

If we see so little of the spiritual world, is it not because we do so little to *prepare* ourselves for that sight ? Let us cleanse the eye of our soul

by real penitence, quicken our hope and faith by earnest prayer, and cause the dull embers of our love to burst into flame by feeding them with acts of sacrifice ; and what may we not hope to see of that world which is so near to us ?

V. Our fellowship with the Saints and Angels is a matter of distinct revelation, and is one of the most helpful doctrines of the Creed. Not to quote more than one passage of Scripture, we read in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews : “ But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect ” (verses 22 and 23).

Here the writer of the Epistle, comparing the two Covenants of God, given through Moses and through CHRIST, contrasts the coming of the Jews to Mount Sinai with all its terrors, with the coming of CHRIST’s people to Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem. And among the privileges of Christians which he enumerates perhaps the chief is fellowship with the Angels and Saints ;— “ the innumerable company of Angels,” and “ the spirits of just men made perfect.”

As we have already seen, the whole Bible is full of instances of angelic ministrations to men ; and

in the same chapter of the same Epistle we are urged to lay aside every weight . . . because “we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses”—of Saints and Angels (verse 1). But let us confine ourselves to the fellowship of the Holy Angels.

What a help the thought of this fellowship should be to us ! Some, however, may ask, “In what way can it be a help to us ? In what way is the fellowship in any sense real ? for we cannot *talk* to the Angels.” No, but talking is not everything.

To lovers of music there is probably no greater pleasure than the performance of a piece of concerted music, and yet those who are performing it cannot talk whilst they are playing, but they all have a common interest in performing the same work, each doing his own part ; they all pause together, they all crescendo together, they all keep the same time and rhythm. And so we and the Angels have true fellowship with one another, not by talking together, but by having the same interests.

This fellowship may be traced in various ways.

i. Both we and the Angels have the same beginning and end,—God. Of both it can be said that they came from God, belong to God, and have God as their end.

ii. Then there is a fellowship in work. With

both the highest duty and greatest happiness must be to do GOD'S Will, to finish GOD's work ; and we must remember that all work which it is our duty to do, is in some sense GOD's work, and therefore can be offered to Him. The Angels, who obey GOD's commands in the spiritual world, and man, who fulfils GOD's purpose in every-day life, have a fellowship in common work.

iii. There is also a fellowship in common worship ; and this is especially realised in the great act of Christian worship, the offering of the Holy Eucharist. At every celebration we are reminded of this by the Preface, “Therefore *with Angels and Archangels*, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee.” And all worship as it were depends upon that solemn Eucharistic act ; for the other Offices of the Church are but as echoes of the Eucharist, and are almost meaningless where there is no offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

iv. Moreover, this fellowship with the Angels involves mutual love. They love us because GOD loves us ; and they willingly obey His behests in ministering to our needs in a thousand ways of which we know nothing ! But many instances of angelic help are recorded for us in the Holy Bible ; and in the Lives of the Saints too we read many,

many stories of angelic assistance in the hour of need.

v. Again they help us, and the help is mutual ; for we are continuing here on earth the battle which the Angels began in Heaven when “ there was war in Heaven: Michael and his Angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in Heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him ” (Rev. xii., 7, 8, 9).

The Angels hurled the rebel Lucifer and his hosts from Heaven, and it is our work to conquer him on earth ; and this must be done before that “consummation of all things,” when the Devil and his hosts shall be cast out of the earth too, and shut up for ever in the bottomless pit. We are carrying on the work the Angels began ; we are fighting for their King against His ancient foe.

vi. The realisation of this fellowship with the Holy Angels should give us confidence in our struggle, and consolation in times of great temptation. We read that after our LORD’s temptation Angels came and ministered to Him ; and they minister no less to us, though from our want of spiritual sight we do not see them. We should

invoke their aid in time of danger,—for we know that each of us has at least a Guardian Angel,—and in our work ; and especially in our worship. The thought of our fellowship with those bright spirits should stimulate and refresh us as we strive to fulfil in our poor way on earth what they do so perfectly in Heaven.

Perhaps we may realise this fellowship with the Holy Angels best by thinking of the celebration of a Solemn Mass in some great Cathedral. There is the Priest at the Altar offering the Holy Sacrifice, with the Sacred Ministers and the Acolytes, the Choir singing their parts and the orchestra accompanying them. In that Choir and orchestra each has a special part to perform ; some a part prominent and important ; others have merely the work of filling in the intermediate harmonies ; but all are necessary to the general effect, and if any one is out of tune or out of time, that one more or less spoils the perfection of the work.

So is it in our fellowship with the Angels. The universe is GOD's great Cathedral, our LORD the Great High Priest ; and Angels and Saints in Heaven, and men on earth, both in their work and in their worship, are like the Choir and orchestra, all engaged in one great effort to glorify GOD, to do His holy Will, and to praise His sacred Name.

Our part may be like that of some insignificant

instrument in the orchestra, or a voice in the chorus, filling in only the intermediate harmonies, but if our part is not rightly performed we are in danger of spoiling the perfection of the work. If we rightly do our part here, the happy day will come when, by the discipline of earth, we shall have been tuned and trained to take our place before the Throne of GOD, and to have our share in the triumph-song of Heaven, where all will be perfect harmony, all one glorious and eternal burst of praise to Him Who has redeemed us by His Blood and has made us kings and priests unto our GOD. +

IV.

HOLY ASSOCIATIONS.

“ HE IS NOT HERE : FOR HE IS RISEN, AS HE
SAID. COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE THE
LORD LAY.” *S. Matt. xxviii., 6.*

S. MATTHEW and S. Mark both record this invitation of the Angel to behold the place where the LORD lay. While its first purpose may have been to assure the women by ocular demonstration of the truth of the statement, “ He is not here, He is risen,” by showing them the empty tomb ; yet we may well gather from it a lesson for ourselves in regard to the helpfulness of holy associations.

With what feelings of awe, reverence, and love did the holy women stoop down and gaze into the empty tomb ! “ He is not here, He is risen. Why seek ye the living among the dead ? ” And yet there is the invitation, “ Come, see the place where the LORD lay.” In this seeming paradox, —“ Why seek ye the living among the dead ? ”

“Come, see the place where the **LORD** lay,”—we have a lesson in regard to the usefulness of holy associations, and a warning against their abuse.

I. There are few among us, probably, who have not at times realised the helpfulness of associations of place. As we stood on the site of some old, historic scene, how the place not only brought vividly back what we had read in times gone by, but quickened the dull page with life !

For example, one’s first visit to Rome : the Forum, with its classic memories ; the Colosseum, with its scenes of Christian heroism ;—what recollections did they awake of a glorious past, of which we had read indeed with quickening pulse ; but when we stood there on the very spot, how vividly the scene came before our eyes !

With what interest we examined every relic of those martyrs who laid down their lives for **CHRIST** so bravely, so willingly, and who by their blood washed idol-worship away from the fields of Europe. Nor did our conscience fail to reproach us because, in spite of our noble resolves, we, their descendants, had failed so often to confess our **LORD** even in the little details of daily Christian life.

And then, as we travelled from place to place in that land rich with so many memories of the past, how our heart burned within us as we wandered through the cloisters and cells of San Marco at

Florence, and studied the works of Fra Angelico and Fra Bartolommeo, who seem to have painted in lasting colours the inspirations which they caught on their knees ! And then we visited the cell of that great reformer Savonarola, and saw the crucifix at the foot of which he learned that lesson, which in burning words he taught the luxurious nobles of Florence. Who shall say that we were not the better for these thoughts ?

And then, when we visit the tombs of the Saints and kneel at the shrine of S. Dominic at Bologna, and of S. Francis at Assisi, and think of the religious Orders they founded, the thousands of devout souls who followed in their steps ; or the tomb of S. Philip at Rome, or of his friend S. Carlo at Milan, and think of the reformation those two men effected in their day—what thoughts arise in our minds ! Or when, at Toulouse, we gaze at the head of that mighty theologian, S. Thomas Aquinas, whose thoughts have guided the theologians of the Church for so many centuries, we seem to hear the words, “ Come, see the place where he lies.” GOD’s servant, man, like thyself ; the same frail, sinful human nature, the same flesh and blood, the same temptations, the same grace—for what had they more than we have in the Sacraments of the Church ?—and yet centuries have passed, and their work remains.

And do not such thoughts rouse us to fresh

effort, stir within us holy ambitions, and remind us that our *LORD* has given “ to every man his work ” ? Are not such associations helpful ?

Or again, in our own life, have we not noticed how associations of place call up memories of earlier days ? In revisiting the scenes of boyhood or youth, for instance; the school, that little world whose years were so few and whose experiences seemed so many; the Church in which we received for the first time each Sacrament ; the Font in which we were regenerated ; the Altar at which we made our first Communion—how many holy recollections roll in on the flood-tide of memory thus awakened ! Holy desires, solemn resolutions, alas ! often forgotten, many times broken ; but are we not the better for facing them, and has not many a one started afresh and persevered more faithfully after such recollections ?

II. But there is the word of warning, “ *He is not here.* ” Those relics, helpful in many ways, holy as they may be, are not all. We are to think of the Saints enjoying their reward amid the bliss of Heaven, drinking in, as from a river, streams of delight, the glorious Vision of *God*.

And as we are fired by this thought to follow in their steps, we may remember that we are “ compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses ” ; that we not only think of the Saints, but they think of us, care for us, watch us, and are ready

to help us if we seek their aid. And so we ask them to pray for us, that we may have grace and strength to fight as they fought for CHRIST, and like them to win the crown.

But if these associations are helpful, how much more so are all those which bring us, as it were, into communication with our LORD Himself; how great is the helpfulness of a thorough knowledge of all the circumstances of His Life, so that we may recall the scenes, so that we may "come and see the place where He lay,"—making His earthly life more real, more vivid to us, as we meditate on it day by day.

How easily we forget these things! All helps to memory are good; the visiting of holy places is among the best, because of the power that they have of quickening our memory and our affection.

In conclusion, let us return to the first lesson which these words are intended to teach—the lesson of the empty tomb: "He is *not here*, He is risen." We are not to be contented with the mere associations of the past. For all the things which remind us of CHRIST and of His Saints carry our thoughts and hopes beyond this world, not merely to the grave of earthly memories, but to that glorious Kingdom where, if we are faithful, we shall one day reign with Him, and be "numbered with His Saints in glory everlasting."

And this thought robs earth's trials of their terrors and sweetens life's sorrows, gives new courage to bear the Cross, and urges us on to follow Him ! “ He is not here, He is risen. Come, see the place where the **LORD** lay.”

V.

THE VISIT OF S. PETER AND S. JOHN
TO THE SEPULCHRE.

“ THEN SHE RUNNETH, AND COMETH TO SIMON PETER, AND TO THE OTHER DISCIPLE, WHOM JESUS LOVED, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, THEY HAVE TAKEN AWAY THE LORD OUT OF THE SEPULCHRE, AND WE KNOW NOT WHERE THEY HAVE LAID HIM. PETER THEREFORE WENT FORTH, AND THAT OTHER DISCIPLE, AND CAME TO THE SEPULCHRE. SO THEY RAN BOTH TOGETHER: AND THE OTHER DISCIPLE DID OUTRUN PETER, AND CAME FIRST TO THE SEPULCHRE. AND HE STOOPING DOWN, AND LOOKING IN, SAW THE LINEN CLOTHES LYING; YET WENT HE NOT IN. THEN COMETH SIMON PETER FOLLOWING HIM, AND WENT INTO THE SEPULCHRE, AND SEETH THE LINEN CLOTHES LIE, AND THE NAPKIN, THAT WAS ABOUT HIS HEAD, NOT LYING WITH THE LINEN CLOTHES, BUT WRAPPED TOGETHER IN A PLACE BY ITSELF.

THEN WENT IN ALSO THAT OTHER DISCIPLE, WHICH CAME FIRST TO THE SEPULCHRE, AND HE SAW, AND BELIEVED. FOR AS YET THEY KNEW NOT THE SCRIPTURE, THAT HE MUST RISE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD. THEN THE DISCIPLES WENT AWAY AGAIN UNTO THEIR OWN HOME.” *S. John xx., 2-II.*

WE are so familiar with the details of our LORD’s Resurrection as a *history* that probably most of us do not realise how marvellously full it is as a *revelation*. Every type of character and class of evidence seem to be brought before us. Personal love, personal penitence, impersonal thought, and even doubt, are exhibited in S. Mary Magdalene, S. Peter, the two Disciples at Emmaus, and S. Thomas, respectively; all finding their need supplied and their faith in the Resurrection confirmed by a special and individual revelation given to them by our LORD Himself.

But besides the appearances to individuals and to the assembled Disciples, we have in the case of S. John an unique experience, leading to perfect faith in the Resurrection before he had seen our LORD. Indeed, excepting of course the Blessed Virgin, we may say of him alone, what our LORD said to S. Thomas: “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

I. The passage of Scripture which we are now to consider contains an account of this experience of S. John, and tells us, as it seems, with great accuracy exactly what was the character of the evidence which led him to believe that his **LORD** had risen. But before we consider it, let us glance for a moment at the scene.

S. Mary Magdalene had hastened back from her first visit to the tomb, and finding S. Peter and S. John, had said to them, "They have taken away the **LORD** out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." How pathetic is her story!—especially when we remember that she had no expectation of finding that her **LORD** had risen. She had set out to anoint the dead Body,—all that was left her of Him she loved so dearly,—and that was gone!

How natural was the action of S. Peter and S. John on hearing the news! "They ran both together; and the other Disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre." He outran S. Peter because, being younger, he was more agile; but reverence or some other feeling held him back, for when he reached the tomb he stooped down and looked in only, but did not go in.

S. Peter comes up soon after, and at once enters the tomb, and sees the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which was upon His Head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, rolled together

in one place. Then S. John also entered, and saw this and believed. "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the Disciples went away again unto their own home."

We must very carefully notice in this place the emphatic change, in verse 8, of the verbs to the singular. The whole narrative is an account of what two Apostles did together. They ran together. They entered the Tomb together, S. John waiting for, but immediately after following, S. Peter. Together they "knew not"—or rather understood not—"the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." And they went together "away unto their own home."

And yet, although S. John writes the whole account thus in the plural, he makes an emphatic exception in verse 8 by using two verbs in the singular which separate the plural verbs and cannot, therefore, have been placed there unintentionally.

S. John evidently desires to speak of an experience which was peculiar to himself. He cannot testify for S. Peter; he can do so for himself, and this must have been one of the ineffaceable experiences in his life. He tells us of it with special clearness and in doing so admits us to see the evidence by which he reached his belief in the Resurrection.

II. What was this evidence? There can be no

question but that it was the sight of the grave-clothes ; and yet perhaps, it is not easy to see why they should have produced such conviction in S. John.

Many commentators tell us that the circumstance which convinced S. John that the Body had not been taken away, but had risen, was (to quote from Godet), that "these linen cloths, spread out, did not suggest a removal, for the Body would not have been carried away completely naked. The napkin especially, rolled up and laid aside carefully, attested not a precipitate removal, but a calm awakening."

This is undoubtedly true so far as it goes, and yet seems scarcely a sufficient reason for so extraordinary a conviction. For while the condition of the cloths may not have suggested a precipitate removal, it was at least compatible with the *removal* of the Body, and there was no special reason to suppose that a *precipitate* removal was necessary.

But a careful examination of the original language used appears to suggest a very different and far more satisfactory explanation. It was not, as Godet and others understand, that the napkin had been "rolled up and laid aside carefully," but that the napkin was *in precisely the same condition* in which it had been left by those who laid our Blessed *LORD* in the tomb. If we turn to

the account of our LORD'S burial (S. Matt. xxvii., 59, 60), we read : " And when Joseph had taken the Body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb." The word " wrapped " (*ἐνετύλιξεν*) is in the aorist, and signifies the act, which they all witnessed, of wrapping the linen cloth around the Body, a special napkin being wound about the Head.

In the passage in S. John which we are now considering, the same word is used in the perfect participle (*ἐντετυλιγμένον*), which signifies that the napkin was still in the condition in which it had been placed when it was wound about the sacred Head.

Though the perfect participle *might* signify the rolling up of the napkin after the grave-clothes had been removed from our LORD'S Body (if such had been the case), yet *πτύσσω* would have been the ordinary word to describe this,* and is the word which is actually used of the folding up of a bandage.† It is noticeable that *πτύσσω* in the only place in which it occurs in the New Testament, S. Luke iv., 20, is used in this sense.‡

The reason why *ἐντυλισσω* would not have been a good word to represent the ordinary *folding up* of a napkin, is that it implies the wrap-

* Homer, *Od.*, i. 4, iii. 9, vi. 111, 252.

† Hippocrates, *Fract.*, 758.

‡ *καὶ πτυξας τὸ βιβλιον η. τ. λ.*

ping around *something* (the noun $\tauύλη$ or $\tauύλος$ meaning a swelling), and that the verb in this case requires that the swelling should have been produced by the Head around which the napkin had been wrapped.

Now this is exactly what would have been the case if our **LORD** had risen passing through the grave-clothes, as He did through the stone of the tomb, without unwrapping them.

The cloth wrapped about the Body would collapse on account of the greater width of the folds ; the napkin wrapped around the Head would probably retain its form, and would be separated from the other grave-clothes (for it was not attached to them), possibly rolling slightly apart when that which kept them all together was removed.

So S. John accurately observed that “ the napkin, which was about His Head,” was “ not lying with the linen clothes, but rolled together—in a place by itself”—literally, “ apart, in one place.”

What was it, then, which produced in S. John a conviction that our **LORD** had indeed risen ? Surely it was the circumstance that he found the grave-clothes lying exactly as they had been wrapped around our **LORD**’s Body, and especially the napkin retaining the form of the Head, thus proving beyond question that the Body had passed out of it without disturbing its folds.

This evidence is almost always overlooked, and,

as it seems, misinterpreted—sometimes even contradicted ; and yet the very noticeable change in the verbs, which tells us that the sight of the grave-clothes produced faith in S. John, surely implies something more than that he merely saw the cloths folded, which would have been quite compatible with the removal of the Body by foes. And in addition to this, we have the fact that the ordinary translation ignores the force of *ἐντυλισσω*.*

III. The lesson which we may draw from this scene is the quickness of love to believe. “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

* An objection which has been made to this is that when *εἰς* is used instead of *ἐν*, or rather has the force of *ἐν* (for *εἰς* is not infrequently construed with verbs of rest), the idea of motion preceding or accompanying was originally included ; so that *ἐντευλιγμένον εἰς ἐν τόπον* would be translated “wrapped together [and put] into one place,” the idea of motion in putting it in place being understood. But is not this rule equally satisfied if we understand that when the Body passed out of the grave-clothes, the napkin, being deprived of that which kept it in place, while retaining the form of the Head (as expressed by *ἐντευλιγμένον*), by its weight rolled slightly apart (*χωρὶς*) into one place? This gives to the verb its exact significance, seems to satisfy all conditions required by the Greek, and, at the same time, explains the extraordinary conviction at once produced in S. John.

The Vulgate of this passage, “*sed separatim involutum in unum locum*,” seems to support this view.

Love has an intuition of its own. No one who loves GOD is troubled much with doubts, for love finds evidence for its faith which others would entirely overlook. As we learn, then, to love GOD more, we shall come to know Him better, and our faith will have a firmer grasp of His revelation.

The many kinds of evidence for the Resurrection which were offered to different temperaments, different types of character, according to the needs of each, will be noticed in considering the appearance of our LORD to S. Thomas.*

Sceptics speak of faith in the Resurrection as the result of an excited imagination in persons who *wanted* to believe it. The Bible gives exactly the opposite account ; it tells of incredulity in all, even in S. John, and that this incredulity was gradually overcome in individuals of different intellectual mould by different kinds of evidence, there being given to each that which was most convincing to him.

It is a common though shallow accusation of sceptics that GOD ought to have made His revelation clearer, so that all might be compelled to believe. But there can be no *compulsion* of faith, for then it would cease to be faith. And surely as we examine this fundamental miracle of the Resurrection, on the truth of which Christianity

* Chap. xiii., p. .

depends, it seems impossible to conceive of clearer evidence than that of which we read in the Gospel record and which effectually removed doubt from the minds of so many different individuals.

VI.

WHY WEEPEST THOU?

“JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU? WHOM SEEKEST THOU?”

S. John xx., 15.

THESE words have a significance of their own which perhaps is not always noticed, and which arises out of the occasion on which they were spoken. S. Mark tells us that our LORD after His Resurrection appeared first to Mary Magdalene, and as these were the first words which He then addressed to her, we see that they are the *first* recorded words our Blessed LORD uttered after His Resurrection.

They have, therefore, a twofold interest: that which pertains to them as the first words of our LORD's Resurrection Life, and then that which must be aroused in us by any question asked by our LORD. For He never asked any question for lack of knowledge, but rather to lead us to investigate the true causes of such actions as from their

very frequency we are in danger of misunderstanding ; and by this means He would bring us to a clearer apprehension of them.

But before we consider our **LORD'S** question to S. Mary Magdalene, let us briefly trace what passed after she, with the other women, reached the tomb and found the stone rolled away. They had carried the news at once to the other Disciples, S. Mary especially addressing herself to " Simon Peter, and to the other Disciple, whom **JESUS** loved," saying unto them, " They have taken away the **LORD** out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him " (S. John xx., 2). S. Peter and S. John had then hastened to the sepulchre, and had entered it—S. Peter first, and afterwards S. John ; they had seen there the linen cloths lying still wrapped together, as when swathed around the Body, and they had departed, —S. Peter wondering, S. John believing.

They had departed ; but Mary remained behind, and stood without at the sepulchre, weeping ; and as she wept, she took courage just to look into the sepulchre. She sees " two Angels in white sitting, the one at the Head, and the other at the Feet, where the Body of **JESUS** had lain " (S. John xx., 12). They ask her the question which our **LORD** afterwards asked her, " Woman, why wepest thou ? "

Neither the vision nor the question of the

Angels seems to surprise or to arouse her. She answers, very much in the words which she had addressed to S. Peter, "Because they have taken away my **LORD**, and I know not where they have laid Him," the chief difference being that she substitutes, "my **LORD**" for "the **LORD**." This was the burden of her thoughts ; this was the one idea in her mind.

She seems to answer the Angels almost mechanically. She asks them no question ; she expresses no surprise at their presence. She does not even seek their help. She does but utter the ever-recurring theme of her thoughts, "They have taken away my **LORD**, and I know not where they have laid Him."

And then she became conscious of someone standing behind her, and turning back "saw JESUS standing, and knew not that it was JESUS." How should she know ? For the JESUS Whom she sought was the dead Body which she had seen laid in the grave, and for the anointing of which she had prepared and brought the spices.

"Why weepest thou ? whom seekest thou ?" asks our Blessed **LORD**. The first words are the repetition of those of the Angel, but He adds something more, something expressive of sympathy—"Whom seekest thou ?" How rightly He interprets her tears, and, as it were, says,

“ Sorrow such as thine surely must be not for a thing, but for a person.”

✓ Why did she weep ? For sorrow ; for love. It was for Him Whom she had lost, Who had lifted her from terrible sin, Who had freed her from degrading bondage, Who had cleansed her, Who had taught her the possibilities of another life, of another love—a life in which everything that was noble in her nature was called forth ; a love purified and hallowed, and, like all true love, the joy of her life.

Well might she weep, for she had lost Him. What did she seek ? Only, as she supposed, His lifeless Body. What did she find ? The risen LORD. Was ever joy like hers when she heard the word “ Mary ! ” ? We cannot realise it ; for we cannot fathom the depths of her love, or of her sorrow. How, then, can we measure the fulness of her joy ?

But here let us stop, and leaving S. Mary Magdalene, let us take the question as addressed to ourselves, and endeavour to answer it. “ Why weepest thou ? ”

This is a vale of tears, this world through which we are passing. Sorrow is the universal monarch here ; sooner or later every heart is touched by his sceptre, and must bow before his throne. How soon the face which is wreathed with smiles is bathed in tears ! How early upon

the childish memory is ploughed the recollection of sorrow ! This is a vale of tears, for everyone knows what it is to weep. But how many kinds of tears there are ! Let us ask, Why do we weep ? What is the cause of our sorrow ?

I. There are the tears of bitterness, of disappointment, of *failure*; bitter, scalding tears, which give no relief to the heart that sheds them ; tears which only make this dark world still more dark and gloomy. Are our tears ever of this sort ? If so, let us remember that success in life is really of very little value. For the Saints will not be ranged in Heaven according to the degree of the success which they won in this world, but sometimes rather in the order of the failure of their worldly plans.

Let us remember how dangerous is success in this world, fanning, as it does, the flames of ambition and pride, luring the soul on to dizzy heights, not of spiritual progress, but of worldly pre-eminence—dizzy heights, from which the fall is proportionately great. And yet how blessed is that fall, if it takes place in this life, and we see “ that the world we loved so much has turned to dust and ashes at our touch ” !

How many glory in their own success ! How many are glorified by others because they are successful, and receive as their meed this world’s glory ! A Saint of JESUS CHRIST in the hour of

his darkest experience, when even his work for souls—souls, which he loved so dearly—seemed to be an utter failure, proclaimed as the principle of his life and work, “ God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world ” (Gal. vi., 14).

▽ Bitter tears of disappointment and failure ! And yet, perhaps, those very disappointments, those very failures were God’s loving ways of drawing us to Himself, of holding us back from the dangers of success in the world. For God is ever devising means “ that His banished be not expelled from Him ” (2 Sam. xiv., 14); and chiefest among those means we may count disappointments and the failures of our worldly plans.

If we ask what event has most changed the course of this world and influenced it for good, there can be but one answer—the Cross of JESUS CHRIST. And yet, of what does the Cross tell us but of apparent failure ? We follow the Life of CHRIST ; we see its fair promises developing ; the little world in which He lived gradually gathering around Him, bearing witness to Him, “ Never man spake like this Man,”—“ they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His Mouth,”—they glorified Him.

That beautiful Life promised so much, but the Cross shows how those promises, humanly speak-

ing, ended in failure. The nation He came to teach rejected Him ; the people He came to save crucified Him ; a few Disciples only remained faithful to Him ; and yet out of that "failure" came the greatest success the world has ever known, the success which has regenerated mankind !

The bitter tears of disappointment and failure—are they yours ? Oh, if disappointment brings tears to your eyes, let them not be tears of rebellion or bitterness, but gentle tears, relieving the burdened heart,—tears of resignation, tears of patience, tears of thankfulness. For "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him" (Ps. cxxvi., 6, 7).

II. "Why weepest thou ?" There are other tears than those of disappointment or failure. There are the tears of passion, tears caused by the memory of wrongs done to us, or perhaps, what is harder to bear, to those we love ; *angry* tears. But alas ! angry tears are useless tears, for they hurt only ourselves, not those who have wronged us. ✓

How many lives are hardened by such tears, by the spirit of bitterness that cannot forgive, that will not forgive ! Our LORD had wrongs done to Him such as none other ever endured, and when

those wrongs had reached their climax, He said, “FATHER, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (S. Luke xxiii., 34). Mary Magdalene had wrongs worse than her own—the wrongs done to Him Whom she loved so well; but her tears were not tears of anger. She had learned the lesson of Calvary, and doubtless could say with her LORD, “Forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

And are our tears ever such as these,—are our sorrows the outcome of injuries done to us, injuries which we resent, bitterly resent? How much misery does anger bring into the world! It caused the first murder; our LORD teaches that it is essentially of the same character as murder: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. . . . But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (S. Matt. v., 21, 22). If some wrong is rankling in our heart and killing the love of God in us, let us pray, “From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, good LORD, deliver us.”

III. “Why weepest thou?” Not only are there the tears of disappointment and of anger, but yet again there are the tears of *remorse*. In the last case we considered those tears which are caused by our being unable to forgive others who

have wronged us. Now we must think of those which flow because we cannot forgive ourselves.

Remorse ! What is it but the biting tooth of self-reproach, finding its strength and permanence in disappointed pride ! Remorse!—the false penitence of Judas,—not the change but the pain of heart, eating into the life ! Vain regrets for a past regarded in the light of its consequences rather than in relation to its guilt—a past which, while it can never be undone, can always be repented of ! Remorse is a foretaste of hell, as surely as true penitence gives almost a foretaste of Heaven !

Such were not the tears of Mary ; for her sins, which were many, were forgiven, because she loved much. Are our tears ever of this character —tears of bitter self-reproach, not the tears of humble penitence ?

IV. “ Why weepest thou ? ” All these tears which we have been considering were tears of bitterness, giving no relief to the burdened heart. But there is another kind of sorrow,—the sorrow of which our **LORD** speaks when He says, “ Blessed are they that mourn ; for they shall be comforted ” (S. Matt. v., 4); the sorrow of which He says, “ Your sorrow shall be turned into joy ” (S. John xvi., 20) ; the tears of which it is written that “ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ” (Rev. xxi., 4); that “ light affliction which . . .

worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv., 17).

Such were the tears of Mary. They were not tears of disappointment, though perhaps none had ever been more disappointed than she, and disappointed in the loss of Him she loved, the bitterest of all sorrows! No; hers were not tears of anger, though He Whom she loved more than life had been so grievously wronged. Nor were they tears of remorse, though her sins had been many; they were tears of *sorrow*, gentle sorrow.

They were like the summer rain falling so quietly, and drunk in so eagerly by the thirsty earth; like the summer rain, refreshing the parched ground and reviving the drooping flowers. What a contrast there is between the rainstorms of winter, in their violence denuding the earth, leaving devastation and destruction in their path, and the gentle showers of the summer!

"Blessed are they that mourn!" Yes, there are tears which bring joy, which relieve the pent-up feelings, which seem to moisten the hardening heart, which wash away in their course all bitterness! They are the tears of a sorrow which is borne, like Hezekiah's, in reliance upon God! "I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me. What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it: I

shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O LORD, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit : so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live" (Isa. xxxviii., 14-16).

"Blessed are they that mourn ; for they shall be comforted." "I did mourn as a dove." Yes, as moved by *the Dove, the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter.*

i. And these blessed tears may have more than one cause. Sometimes they come from physical pain, from bodily suffering ; and yet the HOLY GHOST can teach us, as He taught S. Paul, to rejoice in our sufferings, by enabling us to realise that in some mystical way they fill up what is behind of the sufferings of CHRIST, for His Body's sake, which is the Church ; we can rejoice in our bodily sufferings because we have learned that they are of sacramental efficacy in uniting us to CHRIST in His Passion (Col. i., 24).

ii. Again, there are the tears which are the result of mental distress and perplexity, of darkness and gloom, of doubt and difficulty, when we cannot see our path, when we cry to GOD for help and seem to hear no answering Voice—the sorrow of *feeling* ourselves forsaken by GOD. And yet the Word of GOD which records our Saviour's mysterious cry of dereliction, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" brings us

also GOD's promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. xiii., 5).

There are sorrows in which the HOLY GHOST helps us to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii., 15); "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Gen. xxxii., 26);—the tears of mental anguish which seem to gain for their answer, "Tarry thou the LORD's leisure: be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the LORD" (Ps. xxvii., 16).

✓ iii. And then, hardest of all to bear, perhaps, there are the tears of bereaved affection, when, like Mary, "we mourn the lost, the dear." Nay, not lost, but gone before; for our LORD at Easter asks us the question, "Why wepest thou?" that He may gently bid us wipe our tears. And when we are tempted, like Martha, to say reproachfully, "LORD, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," He says to us, "Thy brother shall rise again" (S. John xi., 21, 23).

iv. And then, lastly, there are the tears which spring from penitence, blessed tears! for "a broken and a contrite heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not despise" (Ps. li., 17).

Do our tears always come under one of these heads? Are our bodily sufferings borne in fellowship with our LORD's Agony on the Cross, our mental sufferings in union with His cry of dereliction? Do we bear our bereavements looking

“ for the Resurrection of the dead, and the Life of the world to come ” ? Do we make the remembrance of our sins the fuel of love, because they have been washed away in the Precious Blood ?

“ Why weepest thou ? ” How happy if we can answer, Because we have learned the sacramental efficacy of sorrow : because we have experienced the truth, “ Blessed are they that mourn ; for they shall be comforted ” : because we would not lose that special joy of Heaven, when our tears shall all be wiped away by GOD’s own Hand ! How sad it would be in that blessed day to have no tears for GOD to wipe away !

VII.

WHOM SEEKEST THOU?

“JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU? WHOM SEEKEST THOU?”

S. John xx., 15.

HERE are really two questions here, though they are most intimately connected. “Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?” The first had already been asked by the Angels. In the second our LORD rightly interprets Mary’s grief when He asks, “*Whom* seekest thou?” He assumes that grief such as hers can be only for a person, not for a thing; that the calamity which has caused her grief must be the loss of one she loved.

In the last address we considered the words “Why weepest thou?” Now let us turn to the remainder of the question, “Whom seekest thou?”

As we have before noticed, our LORD’s questions were never asked because He needed to

know, for, being omniscient, He knew all things. His questions were always intended to awaken in those to whom they were addressed (and also in ourselves) a deeper train of thought than the mere words themselves might seem to suggest.

In Mary's case, she was seeking not only her love, but her **LORD** ; she sought Him Who was not only her life, but also her religion. She was impelled in her search not only by her love, but by her allegiance, for **CHRIST** was indeed her All. It was not that His teachings had merely helped her and guided her in her life ; it was that His power had cleansed her and cast out of her seven devils. He was, therefore, not only the object of her affections ; He was also, as she said, her **LORD**.

I. "Whom seekest thou ?" When we ask this question of ourselves in regard to our religious life we are at the very outset confronted with that unique feature which differentiates Christianity from every other religion which has claimed the allegiance of man.

Many points of resemblance may be traced between Christianity and those earlier religions which, though imperfect and mingled with much error, were still adumbrations of Christianity, since the **WORD** ever was and is "the Light Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (S. John i., 9). All these, however, differ

from Christianity in this, that they claim allegiance to a system of philosophy or of religion, while Christianity demands devotion to a *Person*.

Buddhism, Confucianism, Islamism, are all of them systems which have no essential or continuous relation to their founders, though they are associated with their names. Any one of these religions could be accepted and practised by those who knew nothing of the life or character of the founder. They demand the observance of a set of rules ; that is, they enjoin certain precepts, which would be just as valuable and just as binding if Buddha and Confucius and Mahomet had been merely mythical personages.

Christianity, on the other hand, is the religion of CHRIST, and if there were any uncertainty about Him, about His Person and Character, Christianity, except as a mere ethical system, would be an utter failure. The Mahometan may claim as his faith that " Allah is great, and Mahomet is His prophet," but Mahomet is after all only a memory. The Christian, on the other hand, sums up his religion in the words of S. Paul, " CHRIST is All " (Col. iii., 11).

Take away CHRIST, and Christianity fails. For by CHRIST the Christian means not a memory, but CHRIST the living Person, Who demands the devotion of the heart and mind and life as much as, nay more than, when He walked this earth.

II. "Whom seekest thou?" Let us see what the answer to this question involves.

i. In the first place it involves some knowledge of CHRIST's Life and history. To the Mahometan or Buddhist it may be of interest to know the story of the life of the founder of his religion, just as we are interested in knowing the lives of all great men who by their personal force or teaching have influenced the current of events in which we find ourselves involved.

To the Christian it is not merely interesting but it is *essential* to know the Life of CHRIST, for the events of His Life are the dogmas of our faith. It is not only interesting to learn about the birth and parentage of our Blessed LORD ; it is essential, for the Incarnation is the keystone of Christianity.

It is not only interesting to read the story of our LORD's Passion and Death ; it is essential, for "with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii., 5), by His Death we are saved, His Cross is our hope and refuge, and by His Precious Blood we were redeemed.

It is not only of interest to be told the story of our LORD's Temptation ; it is necessary that we should know that "we have not an High Priest Which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv., 15).

It is not only interesting to *hear* that He rose

again the third day, and ascended into Heaven ; it is essential to *know* this, for if CHRIST be not raised our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins (1 Cor. xv., 17) ; and if CHRIST be not ascended He has not “ opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers,” and we cannot follow Him “ in heart and mind, and with Him continually dwell.”

In a word, if we are seeking as the end of our religion not the observance of a system of rules, but devotion to a living Person, we must certainly know His Life.

ii. Moreover, we must not only know the events of His Life, we must also make that Life our example, for every act of His Life becomes a law of our own life. Again and again He told those whom He called to be His Disciples that they must follow Him, and He made this the condition of discipleship when He said, “ If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me ” (S. Luke ix., 23).

iii. We must not only know the events of His Life and follow His example, but we must also study His teachings ; for those who believe not in Him yet bear witness that “ never man spake like this Man ” (S. John vii., 46) ; and He Himself has said, “ The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life ” (S. John vi., 63), “ He that . . . receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken,

the same shall judge him in the last day" (S. John xii., 48), "If a man love Me, he will keep My words" (S. John xiv., 23).

iv. And is this all? No; for it is possible to know a great deal about CHRIST—in some measure to accept Him as the perfect example—and even to look upon His teachings as the best guide in the affairs of life, and yet in no real sense to be a Christian.

Something more is wanted, and that is *devotion to Himself*, to His Person. S. Paul's prayer was "that I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. iii., 10). There is an immense difference between knowing Him and "knowing about" Him, between devotion to Him and mere interest, or even faith, in the story of His Life.

S. Paul did not pray that he might know the fact of His Resurrection, but its *power*. The knowledge of the fact would be to us of little value unless we experienced its power as a force making itself felt in our own lives. S. Paul did not pray that he might comprehend the greatness of our LORD's sufferings, but that he might know their *fellowship*, that is, that he might suffer in union with CHRIST.

Oh wonderful thought! if we are seeking CHRIST as the end of our religious life, it involves not only a knowledge of His Life and teaching and ex-

ample, but a knowledge of Him, a devotion to Him, a union with Him which makes His Life and teaching and example a living force in our own moral development.

Observe, it is devotion to His *Person*, not to His memory only ; and then remember that His Person is not a human person, but the Person of the WORD of GOD, the Second Person of the ever Blessed Trinity.

v. Once more we ask, What does this seeking of CHRIST involve ? When we realise that He is our All, that He claims not our allegiance to a mere system of theology, but our devotion to His Person, and that He is GOD, surely love, obedience, loyalty must follow.

Love,—for “ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends ” (S. John xv., 13), and love begets love ; if He so loved us, we must love Him.

But love implies obedience, for “ If ye love Me, keep My commandments ” (S. John xiv., 15). “ If a man love Me, he will keep My words ” (verse 23).

And again, love implies loyalty ; not only obedience to precept, but that obedience of which S. Paul speaks as “ bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST ” (2 Cor. x., 5),—which is the expression of a loyalty so great that not only our words and acts, but even our

very thoughts constantly express our loyalty to Him Who is our All.

vi. Once more let us each ask ourselves the question, "Whom am I seeking in my religious life?" And in answering it let us not be contented to say, "I am seeking CHRIST." Let us go on to consider in what way we are seeking CHRIST—whether we are seeking Him merely that we may know a great deal *about* Him, or that we may know *Him* as our LORD and our GOD, as the supreme object of our love and of our devotion, that we may know Him, Whom truly to know is life eternal.

VIII.

S. MARY MAGDALENE.

“JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, TOUCH ME NOT ; FOR I AM NOT YET ASCENDED TO MY FATHER : BUT GO TO MY BRETHREN, AND SAY UNTO THEM, I ASCEND UNTO MY FATHER, AND YOUR FATHER ; AND TO MY GOD, AND YOUR GOD.” *S. John xx., 17.*

TO some this passage has seemed one of difficulty; it will therefore be well for us to examine it and to endeavour to grasp its true meaning, before we proceed to apply its lessons to our own lives.

The apparent difficulty is twofold : to determine exactly the nature and purpose of S. Mary Magdalene’s “ touch ” ; and to understand the relation between the prohibition, “ Touch Me not,” and the reason given—“ for I am not yet ascended.”

i. There is one interpretation which must be noticed only to be emphatically condemned, an interpretation which makes the reason of the pro-

hibition to be the character of the special sin of S. Mary Magdalene's life,—assuming that she was the woman mentioned in S. Luke vii., 37, who was “a sinner.”

That this interpretation has found favour with some is amazing, since it surely shows an entire misapprehension not only of our Blessed LORD's love for sinners, but of His whole Ministry. And it is quite inconsistent to suppose that He, Who had allowed her at the beginning of her penitence to wash His Feet with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head, would repulse her and forbid her to touch Him after she had been not only washed and sanctified, but also had proved her love both at the Cross and at the tomb. Nor may we suppose that sin of any one character, when forgiven, can be a bar between the penitent and the Saviour.

ii. Upon consideration it seems clear that the prohibition refers to the earthly character of Mary's faith and love, and it may be best understood by comparing this scene with its contrast in the 27th verse of this chapter, where our LORD says to S. Thomas, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold My Hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My Side : and be not faithless, but believing.”

Mary looked *only* for the restoration of our LORD'S Life under its earthly conditions ; and in

clinging to Him she would, as it were, retain the old earthly relationship and affection. She had been seeking for the dead Body of her LORD, and now that she found Him living, she thought only of His restoration to the old life of earth. Our Blessed LORD in saying, "Touch Me not," corrects her conception of His merely Human Presence, lifting her love to a higher plane, and pointing her to the truer and closer relationship which was to be hers after His Ascension.

S. Thomas, on the other hand, thought the restoration of the earthly life impossible, and being offered the proof which he demanded, rises from the recognition of the earthly form to the fullest confession of the Godhead of his beloved Master.

Mary substitutes a knowledge of the Humanity of CHRIST for a knowledge of His whole Person. Our LORD in saying, “Cling not to Me” (*μή μονάχεσθαι*), teaches her not to desire to retain the merely human relationship, but to look for one which because spiritual is higher and closer. He does not repulse her love, but He rewards it by making her His messenger to His brethren, allowing her the privilege of being the first to announce the joyful tidings of His Resurrection.

II. While it seems clear that we must consider this to be the right meaning of the words "Touch Me not," it is perhaps a little more difficult to see

the connection of this prohibition with the saying
“ for I am not yet ascended to My FATHER.”

The explanation of the difficulty, however, is to be found in a realisation of the very fact to which our LORD alludes,—that His Life during the Forty Days between His Resurrection and Ascension was peculiar, and in a certain sense an “ intermediate ” state. For though His Humanity possessed all the attributes of the Resurrection Body, It had not yet been raised to the Right Hand of the Throne of GOD ; and the HOLY SPIRIT, by Whose operation the intimate union between the soul and our LORD in glory is effected, had not yet been given.

That is to say, the earthly conditions and relationships had passed away at the Resurrection, but the heavenly ones were not yet fully established. So He says, “ Cling not to Me, as though I were under the conditions of mere earthly relationship, but work for Me now as My messenger to My brethren, and look forward soon to possessing Me by being incorporated into Me.”

III. Having thus far endeavoured to clear up the apparent difficulties in the text, let us now consider the spiritual lesson which it teaches us at Eastertide. Its great lesson is one which is most needed at this season, namely, that Easter is not a *halting-place* in the spiritual life.

i. How often, by a well-kept Lent, with its prayer

and self-denial and penitence, do we make real progress along the narrow way, and then when Easter comes we relax our efforts and are content to stand still ! And, therefore, since it is impossible to stand still in the spiritual life, we go back, and lose the fruit of our hard-earned victories.

No; Easter, so far from being a halting-place, is but the beginning of a new and higher life. Lent calls us chiefly to the negative work of penitence, the removal of sins and habits which are obstacles to progress ; and then, when Easter comes, there is the command, “ Friend, go up higher ” ;—there is the message with which Mary Magdalene was charged, “ Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I am ascending unto My FATHER, and your FATHER ; and to My GOD, and your GOD.” Follow Me.

ii. How seldom we realise that the Resurrection was but an act, and not a state ! There was the earthquake, and the rolling away of the stone, but the LORD had risen. So in the sinner’s life there is the earthquake, the uprooting of his whole nature by some great act of penitence, the rolling away of the stone of sin as he receives his Absolution, and then he is risen.

And here comes in the teaching of the opening words of the Epistle for Easter Day—which are not as we have them in our version, “ If ye then be risen with CHRIST,” but (the verb is in the aorist)

“ If ye then *were raised* with CHRIST ” (pointing not to a state, but to a distinct act by which the Resurrection was accomplished, the act of Baptism or of Absolution). “ If ” this act has been accomplished, then “ seek those things which are above, where CHRIST sitteth on the Right Hand of God.”

iii. It is not the Resurrection Life, but the Life of Ascension which follows on Easter Day. This is what our LORD indicates in His first message : “ I am ascending ” ($\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\alpha\iota\nu\omega$). The act is not completed, but is going on. And it is not a little striking that our LORD in this text uses the same words as in the text which has already been quoted from the Parable in S. Luke xiv., 7-12.

It is the soul which has taken its place in “ the lowest room,” in all the humility of penitence, to whom our LORD addresses the words, “ Friend, go up higher.” And here again we may note that the word “ friend ” in the original is not the word $\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\rho\epsilon$, which is used four times in S. Matthew—xi., 16 ; xx., 13 ; xxii., 12 ; xxvi., 50—but the word $\varphi\iota\lambda\epsilon$, “ beloved.”

It is only to those whose sins have been forgiven that He can apply this term of love. To such He says, “ Go up higher ” ($\pi\rho\sigma\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\beta\eta\theta\iota$)—the word used in our text, “ I am ascending to My FATHER,” etc.

How glorious for us if instead of resting upon

our Lenten victories we press forward in the Ascended Life, following our **LORD** in heart and mind, and with Him continually dwelling! Then the years as they pass will be one long going up higher, until we rest at last in the Most High.

How often now each Lent we fight over again the old battles, to win at Easter the same place; and then, through the reaction which often sets in at Easter, and the want of watchfulness and of realising the command, “Go up higher,” we lose the ground we have gained, and next year have to begin all over again!

Lent is over, Easter is come, and we must lift our eyes from the details of our **LORD**’s earthly Life to the glories of Heaven. We must remember, too, that not only is our **LORD** the “First-Begotten from the dead,” but that in the Session of His Glorified Humanity at the Right Hand of the **FATHER** we see the First-Fruits of humanity raised to the glory for which **GOD** originally created it; for in our Blessed **LORD**’s Exaltation we read the assurance of our own.

IX.

S. PETER.

“THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED, AND HATH APPEARED TO SIMON.” *S. Luke, xxiv., 34.*

OF all our LORD’s Disciples and Apostles, the saddest, when Easter Day dawned, must have been S. Peter. Of all who needed JESUS then, surely it is not too much to say that he needed Him the most.

I. What a Good Friday had S. Peter passed ! He had not been with S. John and the three Marys at the foot of the Cross. Nor does it seem probable that he was with the Apostles, who, though in their cowardice they had forsaken their LORD in His hour of need, were yet perhaps among those who stood afar off ; he may, however, have beheld the scene from a distance.

S. Peter must have been alone in his misery, for not only had he deserted his Master, but he had denied Him, not once, nor twice, but thrice ; and this after his vehement declaration, “ If I

should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise." It is true they had all said this, but our **LORD** had especially warned S. Peter and expressly foretold his denial.

It would seem difficult for us to understand how S. Peter could have fallen into this sin after the warning, were it not for our knowledge of our own wayward hearts, of our own weak wills—were it not that so often we do the same things ourselves.

He had denied his **LORD**, but **JESUS** had "turned, and looked upon Peter"; and, pierced by that look, "Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

What must have been S. Peter's thoughts! In the hour of his trial, after all his promises, after his Master's warning, he had failed. It would not have seemed so hard to bear if he could only have *told* our **LORD** of his bitter sorrow, of his deep penitence,—but after having denied Him, he had silently to see Him dragged away to suffer the greatest ignominy, and to die a malefactor's death!

S. Peter had a strong, affectionate nature, and though he had denied his Master he loved Him, and he must indeed have been broken-hearted; but he was a broken-hearted *penitent*. For, with all his deep self-reproach, his sorrow was not, like that of Judas, remorse and despair. No; that look of **JESUS**, which brought him to himself and to penitence, saved him from despair. For while

the look must have been one of reproach, it was also, we may be sure, one of love.

And as S. Peter went out, and in his misery sorrowed over his sin, we can understand how that look must have reminded him of another supreme moment in his life, when, brought to CHRIST by his brother Andrew, he had for the first time seen our LORD.

For we are told that then, “ when JESUS beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone ” (S. John i., 42). In this verse the term “ beheld ” does but faintly convey the force of the word *εμβλεψας*, which seems to signify that our LORD fixed upon S. Peter one of those piercing glances which looked him through and through and read as it were his inmost soul ; and it was then, when S. Peter felt that our LORD knew him as no one else had ever known him, that our LORD uttered the prophecy “ Thou shalt be called Cephas.”

We can imagine S. Peter going away from our LORD and thinking over and over again, “ That first interview ! That piercing look ! How thoroughly He read me, how fully He knew me ! He saw all my weakness, all my sin ; and yet He said I might become a rock. And I will become a rock ! ”

Let us consider how much had passed in those

three years of trial and temptation ; how much that was glorious,—how much that was sad ! On the one hand there was that splendid confession of faith which brought from our **LORD**'s lips the praise, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My **FATHER** which is in Heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.”

But then on the other hand there were the many failures, the many rebukes, beginning with “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?” (S. Matt. xiv., 31), and increasing in severity until at last he heard the startling words; “Get thee behind Me, Satan : thou art an offence unto Me : for thou savourest not the things that be of **GOD**, but those that be of men” (S. Matt. xvi., 23).

Then on the eve of the Passion, after the wonderful teachings of Holy Week, after the great discourses, after the institution of the Eucharist, S. Peter, in his passionate love for his Master, had thought he could trust himself, and had said, “I will lay down my life for Thy sake.” But his Master had replied, “Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake ? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice” (S. John xiii., 37, 38).

And yet, in spite of the warning, he had utterly

failed and shown himself no better than a coward. He who could draw his sword against a band of soldiers, had been afraid to confess his Master.

What a Good Friday that must have been for S. Peter, with all this burden upon him ; with the longing to get near to our LORD that he might say one word of penitence to Him, and hear one word of forgiveness ! But it was too late ; He died without speaking to him. Then came Holy Saturday, when perhaps he sat apart from the others, and thought over all these things again and again in the bitterness of his soul !

Yes, there was none who needed JESUS on Easter Day so much as S. Peter ; and so, after first rewarding Mary Magdalene's love, our LORD next blesses S. Peter's penitence. None can long for CHRIST, none can really feel the throes of penitence, without winning from our LORD the assurance of His love and pardon.

II. "The LORD is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." What happened at that appearance—what S. Peter told our LORD, what JESUS said to Peter—we know not, excepting so far as we read its results in the history of S. Peter's after-life.

Of the appearances on Easter Day this seems to be the only one of which we are told nothing but the fact ; and yet from this very silence we may learn the lesson that all real penitence must be in

secret,—that a veil must ever be drawn over the outpouring of the sin-laden soul, of the burdened heart, at the Feet of JESUS.

So the Church draws the veil of the Sacramental Seal over all penitence. What the Priest knows as GOD's ambassador he must know less than what he does not know at all. He comes not between the soul and GOD ; but, as the ambassador of CHRIST, he comes to hear the story of sorrow, to bring the message of love, to bind up the wounds of the soul, “ to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ” (Isa. 1xi., 3).

And may we not apply much of this to ourselves—we who are so much more like S. Peter in our denial of CHRIST than we are like him in our love and penitence,—we, whose consciences accuse us of such grievous sin against our LORD, whose hearts tell us of our great need of pardon and help ?

Put yourself at the foot of the Cross. Behold our LORD dying there, as S. Peter probably beheld Him. And as you gaze upon Him, realise, as S. Peter did perhaps more than anyone else, how you have sinned against Him. Think of all your cowardice, all your disloyalty, all your want of love. Pray Him to look you into penitence, as He looked S. Peter.

Did you do this last Good Friday? If not, it is not too late. Do it *now*, and you will be able, after the experience of His pardoning words in Absolution, to say, “The **LORD** is risen indeed, and hath appeared to me, to bid me, to encourage me, to help me—to rise with Him.”

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X.

THE JOURNEY TO EMMAUS.

“AND THEY SAID ONE TO ANOTHER, DID NOT
OUR HEART BURN WITHIN US, WHILE HE
TALKED WITH US BY THE WAY, AND WHILE
HE OPENED TO US THE SCRIPTURES?”
S. Luke xxiv., 32.

THREE are three ways by which man approaches GOD,—three processes by which, speaking generally, individuals are led to accept CHRIST as their LORD and their GOD. They are *drawn* by the cords of love, *driven* by the burden of sin, or *determined* by the force of reason. Love, penitence, thought. The heart, the conscience, the mind. By one of these avenues each man approaches GOD.

And so on Easter Day there are recorded three appearances of our LORD to individuals, which in each case produced absolute conviction in regard to both His Resurrection and His Godhead. S. Mary Magdalene, a loving woman, represents the

first ; S. Peter, a penitent sinner, the second ; and the two Disciples on their way to Emmaus, thoughtful men, represent the third.

In the first two cases we know a great deal concerning the character of those to whom our **LORD** appeared, for there is something intensely personal both in love and in penitence. But since thought, on the other hand, is in a certain sense impersonal, there is an appropriateness in the fact that we know nothing of the individuals in the third case, except that they were Disciples of **CHRIST**, and that the name of one of them was Cleopas.

I. These two were Disciples of **CHRIST**, not Apostles ; and therefore they probably had not heard the wonderful discourses which our **LORD** spoke on the last night of His earthly life, when, apparently, only the Apostles were present ; and therefore they probably knew nothing of the institution of the Holy Eucharist,—unless, indeed, they had been told of it by the Apostles.

This, however, is scarcely likely to have been the case when we remember that the Apostles were dispersed on Maundy Thursday night when our **LORD** was seized, that Good Friday had been a day of great terror, and that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath. While it is of course possible that from some one of the Twelve they had heard something of the Eucharist, it is more probable that they knew nothing of it, excepting, perhaps,

so far as our **LORD** had pointed to it in His previous teachings.

The attitude of the two Disciples as believers in our **LORD** was not, at this particular period, unfavourable, although they were evidently deeply disappointed. They were not *prejudiced* against His Messiahship, but they demanded evidence which they did not think was forthcoming.

As thoughtful, hard-headed men, they considered that the report of the women, who said they had seen a vision of Angels, was insufficient; and that to found upon such evidence our **LORD**'s Resurrection was to build upon it a greater superstructure than the foundation could sustain.

With great simplicity they expressed their own faith, that **JESUS** of Nazareth was "a Prophet mighty in deed and word before **GOD** and all the people." That He had been crucified was to them a matter not of faith, but of common knowledge. His teaching had aroused in them hope "that it had been He Which should have redeemed **Israel**," that is, they had trusted that our **LORD** was the promised Messiah. But in their account of themselves there is no trace of any belief in His Godhead.

In their religious position they represent a considerable number of people whom we meet to-day, who are not only not unfavourable to religion,

but are deeply interested in it ; and who, having examined the evidences of Christianity, as they think, dispassionately, have reached very much the same conclusion about our LORD as had been reached by these two Disciples.

They are quite prepared to admit that JESUS of Nazareth was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before GOD and all the people, that is, that He was a great religious teacher. But they believe only that He was JESUS of Nazareth, the supposed son of Joseph, and perhaps that He was the royal heir of David, but not that He was the SON of GOD.

They are prepared also to accept the historical facts of His Death, and to express their sense of disappointment that a life so beautiful and so full of promise should have ended so sadly, and that He should have failed to deliver the people for whom He sacrificed so much. Theirs is the humanitarian view concerning our Blessed LORD, which is so popular in the present day. *Ecce Homo* is the cry, not *Ecce DEUS*.

II. But the main interest in the story lies not so much in its striking likeness to the religious attitude of many in our own day, as in the fact that it reveals to us our LORD's way of dealing with such habits of mind,—the method which He used in removing difficulties, and bringing such characters to recognise Him as their GOD.

His method was a very simple one. He joined

Himself to them and accompanied them in their journey, without allowing them to recognise Him. As an unknown but most interesting stranger He entered into conversation with them, leading them by skilful questions to give expression to their difficulties.

Then, by using only such evidence as they were prepared to admit, He gradually led them to the inevitable conclusion that JESUS was the Messiah, and that the report of the women was true. When He had thus aroused their hope and quickened their faith, He manifested Himself to them, and they recognised Him as He vanished out of their sight.

That country walk with JESUS, how wonderful it was ! They had been talking of Him in the sacred intercourse of friendship before He joined Himself to them. As friends with a common interest, with a common sorrow, they were discussing the events which had just taken place at Jerusalem, speaking of the bright hopes of past days, perhaps also of the wondrous teachings they had heard from His Lips, as well as of the sad catastrophe which had destroyed their hopes and shaken their faith in Him.

And JESUS, all the time unknown, was with them, guiding them in their conversation, opening their understanding, expounding to them the Scriptures in a light which they had never seen

before,—but which they felt to be the true light,—and causing their hearts to burn within them with holy love ; and, while still unrecognised, leading them to the conclusion that they had not trusted in Him in vain ; and then crowning His work by an act of blessing, which revealed Him as the Master Whom they thought they had lost,—their **LORD** and their **GOD**.

III. May we not in passing gather up two important lessons here? One is, the helpfulness of that true sympathy where men in the sacred intercourse of friendship reveal to one another the hopes and fears, the difficulties and sorrows of their souls' life. The other is, the importance, in dealing with those who do not fully accept our position, of not grounding our arguments on any premises which are not fully admitted by those whom we are striving to convince.

Our **LORD** confines Himself entirely to proving from the Old Testament Scriptures, which the two Disciples fully believed, the doctrines at which they stumbled. That is, He led them slowly, step by step, as they were able to follow, making no demands upon them which required greater faith than they possessed.

When they reached Emmaus the day was drawing to a close. They constrained Him to abide with them. In the “ breaking of bread ”—not the Holy Eucharist, but the common even-

ing meal—they recognised Him, and He vanished out of their sight.

That walk to Emmaus was a type of many a life's journey in this world, beginning in sadness and doubt and difficulty, but ending in the joy of assured faith. How many of those who have come to know CHRIST as their Master and LORD, are able to see, when they look back on their life, how gradually their understanding was opened to know Him, how gradually their hearts were kindled to love Him, their prejudices and their difficulties, their blindness and mistakes one after another were removed !

At the time they hardly knew how it came to pass ; but as they look back upon the journey when its end has been reached, they see that it was our LORD Himself Who was with them always to draw them on ; leading them to express their difficulties that He might answer them ; lightening their eyes that they might not sleep in death ; leading them, by many a path of perplexity, at last unto the glorious light of perfect faith. They can say, as did these two Disciples, “ Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way ? We did not know Him, but He was with us all the time.”

IV. Of the many lessons which this story teaches us, let us take two. First, we learn from the example of our LORD Himself to be very *patient*

with those who are slow to accept the Faith,—with those who require time and what seems to us more than abundant proof.

Our **LORD** teaches us to be very patient with those men of thought who are uninfluenced, except to a very small extent, by emotion, and who are free from the necessity created by great sin ; men who are slowly but conscientiously groping their way towards the Light ; men who are worth all the trouble one has to take with them, for (when they are convinced) the very gradual growth of their conviction seems to ensure its continuance.

The other lesson is for anyone who may be thus seeking the truth, and who, perhaps, is disappointed with his own life, and yet is unable to give himself wholly to **CHRIST**. If we are in this class, surely we learn from the two Disciples to persevere in our investigations ; to strive with open mind to search the Scriptures and the other evidences of Christianity ; to refuse to go any farther along the road of faith than we can honestly see our way ; and to retain with us all helps, such as come to us through friends, or through reading, or attendance at the Services of the Church,—even if we still fall short of absolute conviction.

How blessed will it be if only we recognise our **LORD** and abide with Him ! even though it be

not till the eventide of life. How much more blessed if we know Him in our youth and He becomes the Companion of our journey through life,—if it can be said of us, as of Elisha and his master in each stage of their last journey together, “ And they two went on ”:—on, through all life’s difficulties, until they who have been guided by our LORD through all the days of this life, “ follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth ” through all the days of eternity !

XI.

PEACE THE FRUIT OF THE RESURRECTION.

“ THEN THE SAME DAY AT EVENING, BEING THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, WHEN THE DOORS WERE SHUT WHERE THE DISCIPLES WERE ASSEMBLED FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS, CAME JESUS AND STOOD IN THE MIDST, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, PEACE BE UNTO YOU. AND WHEN HE HAD SO SAID, HE SHEWED UNTO THEM HIS HANDS AND HIS SIDE. THEN WERE THE DISCIPLES GLAD, WHEN THEY SAW THE LORD.” *S. John xx., 19, 20.*

OUR LORD on Easter Day first satisfies the needs of representative individuals. But CHRIST’S Religion is not for man merely as an individual, it is also for man as a race, for society ; and though the Church of CHRIST is made up of individual members, it is itself the aggregate of those members.

And so before Easter Day has passed away our

LORD appears to the representatives of His Church when they were assembled, as we are told, with the doors shut for fear of the Jews. He came and stood in the midst of them, "and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

I. This was His first greeting to His Church after His Resurrection. This was His gift to His people,—peace. And yet "Peace be unto you" does not seem to have been His mode of greeting His Disciples before His Resurrection.

For though in His discourse after the Last Supper He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," yet He was then speaking in anticipation of the Sacrifice which was just about to be offered, and of the battle which was just about to be fought and won. Indeed He had said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (S. Matt. x., 34).

i. This seems paradoxical, but it directs our attention to a great truth—that "peace" is a word which connotes its opposite. For we cannot think of peace apart from war; and so far as we know by experience peace is always the result of war. Thus our LORD says, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." There must be a struggle first, the battle must be fought, and the victory won, before there can be peace.

So it was on Calvary, when all the powers of

evil hurled their forces against our LORD upon the Cross ; Nature shuddered, and the Sun hid his face ; there was darkness, and an earthquake, as that battle between the hosts of evil and the Captain of our salvation reached its climax. The powers of hell had done their worst ; they seemed to have triumphed as our LORD bowed His Head upon the Cross and gave up the ghost ; but it was only a seeming victory, the real triumph was with CHRIST. And on Easter Day, rising from the dead, He bestowed upon His Church the gift which He had won in the long conflict,—the gift of peace, the conditions of which are contained in the Gospel of Redemption.

This is not only true of the past, and of our LORD'S conflict and victory; it is ever true of ourselves. We cannot enjoy any real peace except as the result of war, of struggle, of victory.

ii. And even when peace has thus been won, it needs continual preparation for war in order to preserve it ; just as we see in the present day the nations of Europe groaning under the burden of taxation, and that taxation needed to keep up large standing armies,—not because any nation desires war, but because all realize that in order to avoid war and preserve peace it is necessary to be always prepared for war.

This is a good Easter lesson. If by our Lenten penitence we have won some victories, and through

our Absolution and Communion are entering into the joys of Easter peace, we must remember how needful it is to be always ready for the battle, for temptation may assault us at any time. How dangerous to rest on our laurels ! How wise to expect further struggles and to be always ready for them !

II. When our **LORD** has bestowed upon His people, as the first-fruits of the Resurrection, the gift of peace, He goes on to show them His Hands and His Side. “ Then were the Disciples glad, when they saw the **LORD**.”

Here our **LORD**, having appeared to different individuals, offers to His Church a proof not only of His Resurrection, but of the identity of His Resurrection Body with that which suffered on the Cross. It is especially needful to notice this in an age when the most inadequate views of our Blessed **LORD**’s Resurrection, and of our own, find acceptance in many minds.

There are many who offer to believe in a resurrection of the soul, but stumble at the resurrection of the body. And yet we say in the Creed, “ I believe in the resurrection of the body ”; and the Gospel tells us that our **LORD**, in His first appearance to His assembled Church, directed their attention to the wounds in His Hands and His Side, which were the evidences that His Body had risen, and that His risen Body was identical with

the Body which had suffered on Calvary. Yes ; it was identical, but under *different conditions* ; for those scars were no longer the ghastly, gaping wounds of Calvary ; they shone, we may well believe, with glorious light, each of them as it were a centre and source of radiant splendour.

“ Then were the Disciples glad, when they saw the **LORD**.” And yet their first meeting with Him might have filled them with fear and shame, for one had denied, and all had deserted Him in His hour of trial. Perhaps they felt this before they saw Him, but when they saw Him they were glad ;—glad at the glory and beauty which He manifested in Himself ;—glad at the message of peace, and therefore of forgiveness, conveyed to them by the first words He uttered.

A story is told of a reckless son, who had broken his mother’s heart by his dissipation and neglect of her ; he had been guilty even of cruelty, for at their last meeting, when she gently tried to reason with him, and to bring him to a consciousness of the evil of his life, he had roughly pushed her from him, and she had fallen and hurt herself. Partly in shame, partly in anger, he had left the house, and had never seen her again. And now he was on his way home, summoned by a telegram which told him that his mother was dead. It was agony to him, as he thought of that dear face, marked with the wrinkles and lines of care,

which were all the result of his misconduct. How could he meet her cold in death ? How could he look upon the traces of sorrow on her brow ? And yet, he must ! He reached home. Trembling he entered the room where her body lay, knelt down by the coffin, and looked upon her face. How changed it was ! The wrinkles were gone ; the face was calm and peaceful. Yes, her conflict was over, her victory was won. The vision she had gazed on was not the vision of the sad past, but of the glorious future ; and it had left its impress, as it were, upon the features of the dead.

So it will be with us. We may fear to meet Him when we think how we have wounded Him, and how we shall have to look upon Him Whom we have pierced by our sins, and wounded by our ingratitude and neglect. And yet, like the Apostles, if we are at the moment of the Particular Judgment in a state of grace, we shall be glad when we have seen the **LORD**, for we shall see the King in all His beauty, and the very marks of His love for us—the glorified wounds—will only add to that beauty.

There is in one of our churches an altar frontal of cloth of gold, and in the centre in rich embroidery and jewels our **LORD** in glory is represented, clad in Eucharistic Vestments and with jewelled crown. He stands with outstretched

arms, and the wounds in His Hands and Feet are indicated by diamonds which may be seen far down the church as they flash in the light. It is a true conception, and teaches the Easter lesson of our LORD's glorified Body with the wounds streaming with light and attracting, instead of repelling, those who behold Him.

XII.

THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION.

“ THEN SAID JESUS TO THEM AGAIN, PEACE BE UNTO YOU: AS MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU. AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HE BREATHED ON THEM, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST: WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE REMIT, THEY ARE REMITTED UNTO THEM; AND WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE RETAIN, THEY ARE RETAINED.” *S. John xx., 21-24.*

THE Church of CHRIST needs not only the gift of peace, but the means of preserving that peace amid all the world’s strifes. And so our Blessed LORD on Easter Day, after having given the representatives of His Church the blessing of peace, went on to impart to them those special gifts by which His work is to be continued to the end of the world.

He said to them again, “ Peace be unto you.” For throughout the Church’s earthly warfare she

was to keep before her eyes the peace of GOD which shall be realized in its *fulness* by those of her members who, having been purified from all sin, shall have passed into the Beatific Vision ; that peace of GOD which in a lesser degree is not unknown even to those who are still on the battle-field of life.

I. "As My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you." That is, CHRIST sent His Apostles for the same work ; to be messengers of peace through remission of sin, and to be witnesses of truth ; for both functions necessarily belong to those who are the commissioned representatives of CHRIST.

" As My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you." In the original there is a difference in the " sending " which is lost in the English translation, for the verbs " to send " are not the same. The first (*ἀποστέλλω*) signifies a sending forth from ; the second (*πέμπω*) implies a personal relation between those sent and the sender, which is expressed in S. Matthew (xxviii., 19, 20) by the words "*Go ye . . . lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*"

Having revealed to them the nature of their commission, that they were to continue the work in the world which the FATHER had sent Him to begin (Acts, i., 1), our Blessed LORD went on to bestow upon them the powers by which they were to do that work. " He breathed on them,

and saith unto them, Receive ye the HOLY GHOST : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

"He breathed on them." The word (*ενεφύσησε*) used here by our Blessed LORD is the same as that which in the Greek Version of the Old Testament expresses the act of GOD in the original infusion of the Spirit of Life into man (Gen. ii., 7). This act is now repeated sacramentally by GOD Incarnate ; it represented the gift to His Church of that new life of which He, through His glorified humanity, had become the Source.

We have here the Ordination of the first Ministers of CHRIST's Church, and the *potential* bestowal upon them of those spiritual gifts of the Priesthood which became *operative* after the descent of the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost.

II. We must not confine to this one passage the bestowal of all the gifts of the Priesthood, since at the institution of the Holy Eucharist our Blessed LORD seems to have given potentially the authority to offer the Holy Sacrifice, when He said to His Apostles, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

And we may with all reverence attempt to explain the reason for this division of the two great functions of the Priesthood. It was fitting that at the very institution of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar the power should be given for

its continuation ; but the power to remit sins could not in the same way be given until by the Sacrifice of the Cross the victory had been won and sin atoned for.

Hence the separation of these two functions of the Priesthood. Probably neither of them was exercised by the Apostles until after the Descent of the HOLY GHOST at Pentecost, since He is the Agent in all the Sacraments.

III. Here we may well pause to notice an objection which is sometimes made to the interpretation of this passage (as the Church always has interpreted it) of the gifts of the Priesthood. The objection " is that the words were not addressed to all the Apostles, nor to the Apostles alone, since Thomas was absent, and S. Luke tells us that there were others assembled with the Apostles ; and further, that there is no provision laid down for the transmission of the gift, as the Church teaches in her doctrine of Apostolical Succession."

We may observe at the outset two things : first, that the objection is entirely modern and contradicts the whole Tradition of the Church ; and secondly, that it does not flow naturally from the passage, but is, so to speak, invented in order to avoid the acceptance of the Church's doctrine of the Priesthood with its powers of Absolution.

It is the objection of those only who do not believe in the power of Absolution committed to the

Priesthood of the Church, and who strive to empty of its plain meaning the passage which so emphatically asserts this power,—without being able to offer any other interpretation which does not do violence to the text.

With these two preliminary observations, let us see how little ground there is for the objection.

i. The first part of the objection is, “that the words were not addressed to all the Apostles, nor to the Apostles alone, since Thomas was absent, and S. Luke tells us that there were others assembled with the Apostles” ; and so these others, it is contended, shared whatever authority to remit sins was given by the words.

But this is a purely gratuitous assumption, and not borne out by certain facts which are recorded in other passages of the New Testament. As for the *presence of others* with the Apostles, there are always present at an Ordination others besides those who are ordained ; and it would seem extremely fitting that there should have been witnesses of the Ordination of the Apostles, since their testimony might have been necessary as an evidence of so important an act.

Moreover, if the others who were present did receive this authority, we should expect to find them exercising it ; whereas nothing can be more clear than that after Pentecost the Apostles, and the Apostles alone, exercised these spiritual

powers, until they committed them to others by a distinct act of Ordination.

It was so, for example, in the case of the Deacons ; although their Ministry was so humble, the Apostles, "when they had prayed, laid their hands on them" (Acts vi., 6), that is, ordained them. And in the eighth chapter of the Acts it is distinctly implied that S. Philip, one of the Deacons, had not Apostolic powers ; since, while he was able to baptize the people of Samaria, he was not able to lay his hands on them, that they might receive the HOLY GHOST, that is, to confirm them.

It must also be remembered that S. Luke and S. John regard the circumstance from different points of view.

S. Luke, in his account of this appearance of our LORD, dwells only upon the first part of what S. John records, that our LORD gave them proofs, both of the fact of His Resurrection and of the identity of His risen Body with the Body which had died upon the Cross. And as this evidence was needed, not only by the Apostles, but by all the Church, he mentions that there were others present besides the Apostles.

S. John, on the other hand, dwelling chiefly on the Ordination of the Apostles, makes no mention whatever of the presence of anyone else. How extremely natural this is ! If anyone were describing an Ordination, he would probably con-

fine his description to those who were ordained, and not go out of his way to speak of the people who were in church witnessing the Ordination.

Moreover, S. John says it was "the Disciples" (*οἱ μαθηταὶ*) to whom our Blessed LORD gave these spiritual powers (of the keys); and this expression is not used by S. John (in *direct narration*) of any but the Apostles.

ii. The second part of the objection is just as unreasonable. It is "that there is no provision laid down for the transmission of the gift, as the Church teaches in her doctrine of Apostolical Succession."

It is quite true that there is no provision laid down in these four verses. But the answer to the objection is that immediately after Pentecost we find the Apostles using these powers and transmitting them to others; and they certainly would not have done this if they had not been empowered and instructed to do so.

We are told (in Acts i., 3) that our LORD was seen of the Apostles forty days, and spoke to them "of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." Surely it is perfectly reasonable to conclude that during this time our LORD instructed the Apostles in regard to the perpetuation of their gifts. And this view is confirmed by the action of the Apostolic College in choos-

ing and consecrating a successor in the place of Judas.

The transmission of these powers by Ordination, of which we read in the Acts, is too near the time of their bestowal for any *corruption* to have arisen in the interval.

Moreover, we find that the whole Church of CHRIST has always understood the words of the text as referring to the sacerdotal powers of the Christian Ministry, and that it has been left for those who disbelieve the Church's teaching regarding the Priesthood to invent in modern times the theory which we have just been considering, and which we have shown to be entirely without foundation.

XIII.

S. THOMAS.

“ BUT THOMAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE, CALLED DIDYMUS, WAS NOT WITH THEM WHEN JESUS CAME. THE OTHER DISCIPLES THEREFORE SAID UNTO HIM, WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD. BUT HE SAID UNTO THEM, EXCEPT I SHALL SEE IN HIS HANDS THE PRINT OF THE NAILS, AND PUT MY FINGER INTO THE PRINT OF THE NAILS, AND THRUST MY HAND INTO HIS SIDE, I WILL NOT BELIEVE. AND AFTER EIGHT DAYS AGAIN HIS DISCIPLES WERE WITHIN, AND THOMAS WITH THEM: THEN CAME JESUS, THE DOORS BEING SHUT, AND STOOD IN THE MIDST, AND SAID, PEACE BE UNTO YOU. THEN SAITH HE TO THOMAS, REACH HITHER THY FINGER, AND BEHOLD MY HANDS; AND REACH HITHER THY HAND, AND THRUST IT INTO MY SIDE: AND BE NOT FAITHLESS, BUT BELIEVING. AND THOMAS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, MY LORD AND MY GOD. JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, THOMAS, BECAUSE THOU HAST SEEN ME,

THOU HAST BELIEVED : BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET HAVE BELIEVED." *S. John xx., 24-30.*

IT has been observed by a thoughtful and helpful writer on our Blessed **LORD**'s Resurrection, that while the accounts of the Resurrection are incomplete as a history, so that it is extremely difficult, perhaps even impossible, to piece them together in such a way as to obtain an entirely coherent and consecutive account of all that happened on Easter Day,—yet "the Gospel of the Resurrection," if we may so call it, is absolutely and entirely complete as a *revelation*.

I. It is, indeed, most wonderful to observe how every class of believer was considered and provided for by our **LORD** in His manifestations of Himself on Easter Day and its octave. And it is not a little instructive to observe how the **HOLY SPIRIT** in the inspired record which has been preserved for us has provided for every type of spiritual character, and every kind of religious difficulty.

We have the record of at least three appearances on Easter Day of our **LORD** to individuals—to **S. Mary Magdalene**, to **S. Peter**, and to the two Disciples on the way to Emmaus. (Some, perhaps, would add a fourth, considering the appearance to the women at the tomb to be distinct from

that to S. Mary Magdalene.) And to these we may add another on the octave of Easter, when our LORD appeared to S. Thomas and offered him the particular proof of the reality of His Resurrection which he had demanded.

To some, doubtless, these manifestations which the HOLY SPIRIT has recorded have seemed accidental and without purpose ; but when we examine them more carefully, we cannot but be struck with admiration at the marvellous way in which they seem to have been selected so as to meet exactly all the possible needs of humanity, all the different types of spiritual character.

Our LORD said, just before His Passion, “ I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me ” (S. John xii., 32); and when we consider the methods by which men are drawn to GOD, they seem to fall into four classes. And this division is exhaustive, and corresponds to the four appearances of our LORD to individuals after His Resurrection.

i. The first way in which man is drawn to GOD is by the attracting power of *love*. “ I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love ” (Hos. xi., 4). By this attraction the purest and noblest are chiefly drawn to GOD.

And so our LORD’s first recorded appearance was to a woman who, both as the representative of her sex, and also in her own individual charac-

ter, was the very embodiment of love. It was love that had driven her to the Cross when strong men forsook our LORD and fled. It was love that drew her with other women to the tomb before any men found their way thither. And so the first and highest means by which our LORD draws men to Himself is through that noblest gift of man's nature, that greatest power of human life, the passion—the power of Love.

ii. If we read the lives of God's saints, wherein we can best study the movements of the human soul towards God, we shall probably find that, next to love, *penitence* has been the power by which most men have been brought to CHRIST. The noblest, the purest, have been drawn by love, but the majority are not noble or pure in their natural life, and these, in the misery of the realization of their sins, have been driven to CHRIST as their Saviour through penitence.

Such an one was S. Peter. Grievously had he sinned,—bitterly had he wept over his sin and repented; and so, apparently, the second appearance of our Blessed LORD on Easter Day was to penitent S. Peter. What passed between him and his LORD is veiled from our knowledge, for all true penitence is between God and the soul alone.

The world may see something of the *fruits* of penitence in the amended life, but the pouring out of the soul to God in contrition is known

only to GOD and to GOD's Minister under the Sacramental Seal.

And so, in truest anticipation of the Church's teachings on this subject, all that is recorded of this manifestation of our LORD to S. Peter is in the words, "The LORD is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon" (S. Luke xxiv., 34). We may imagine much, but we can know nothing of what passed between the penitent and the Great High Priest and Absolver.

iii. When we look for the third means by which men are brought to GOD, we shall probably find that it is by the process of *thought*.

While penitence is not confined to any type of character, love and thought probably represent two very distinct classes. Love asks not for reasons,—needs not arguments,—leaps by surest intuition to the fullest faith ; but such love does not belong to every heart, and there are others not less noble who come to GOD by the longer paths and slower methods of earnest, careful thought.

We may bless GOD that there are such men, for without them we could not convert the world and meet its intellectual opposition. Such an one, perhaps, was S. Augustine, slowly and laboriously thinking out the problems of Christianity, till at last the Light burst with overwhelming power upon his soul.

Such also seem to have been the two Disciples whom our LORD overtook on the way to Emmaus. "They communed together and reasoned. . . . Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him" (S. Luke xxiv., 15, 16). He joined in their conversation, and gradually drew out of them the arguments by which He proved to them that He was the Messiah, "He Which should have redeemed Israel,"—the CHRIST. For "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

It was not until the journey had drawn to its close and the evening shades were falling that "their eyes were opened, and they knew Him ; and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures ? "

iv. If this had ended our LORD'S manifestations of Himself after His Resurrection, there would have been a class of men still unprovided for; a small class, it is true, and yet one, we may venture to think, peculiarly dear to our Blessed LORD, and found even among His Apostles ; a class whose temperament brings with it peculiar sufferings, peculiar difficulties ; a class for whom the world can do nothing, for whom CHRIST alone can do all things.

And this class is represented by S. Thomas, who by temperament seems to have been peculiarly slow of spiritual apprehension, and to have been the victim of that greatest of all mental sufferings, doubt.

II. We should greatly err if we thought of S. Thomas as in any way representing the self-satisfied, easy-going sceptic of to-day.

Nay, he rather represents those chosen souls who long with every power of their nature to give themselves in unquestioning faith to their *LORD*, but who are tortured by intellectual doubt, resulting often from the very keenness of their mental powers, and the very fairness and thoroughness of their investigations,—because they see so much to be said on all sides that they suspend their judgment and sometimes withhold the allegiance they long to give.

This is largely a matter of temperament, and so far from looking down upon this temperament as something poorer than the others, we should regard it as belonging in some degree at least to the deepest and highest of all the temperaments, the melancholic,—the temperament of S. Paul.

i. Apart from the lists which we have of the Apostles, S. Thomas is brought before us in the Gospel record only on three occasions. The first is at the death of Lazarus, where, taking the darkest view, as his temperament naturally led

him to do, he says, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (S. John xi., 16).

Our **LORD**, hearing that Lazarus was sick, had proposed that they should go into Judæa again to visit him, and His Disciples had reminded Him of the great danger of going into Judæa, saying, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee ; and goest Thou thither again ?" But S. Thomas, with the clearest recognition of the danger, and indeed with an expectation of the worst, yet with no shrinking from it, said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

Here we have some of the most beautiful characteristics of the melancholic temperament,—strong affection, leading to heroic self-sacrifice deliberately chosen without any hope of success or escape.

ii. S. Thomas is introduced to us the second time in the discourse after the Last Supper, as recorded in the fourteenth chapter of S. John.

Our **LORD**, speaking of His departure, had said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, **LORD**, we know not whither Thou goest ; and how can we know the way ? **JESUS** saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the **FATHER**, but by

Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My FATHER also : and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him ” (S. John xiv., 3-8).

Here S. Thomas, with that intellectual honesty which is one of the best traits belonging to the melancholic temperament, interrupts our LORD when He says, “ Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know,” by protesting that this is more than can be said of their faith—“ LORD, we know not whither Thou goest ; and how can we know the way ? ”

He will not suffer our LORD to assume in him any more faith than he thinks he really has. This is one of the characteristics which often makes the melancholic temperament difficult to deal with, and which sometimes brings down upon it thoughtless censure ; and yet it is this very truthfulness which we all must admire, since it will not allow anyone to think better of it than it deserves.

So we find that it is in strictest accord with what we have been told of S. Thomas before our LORD’s Passion, that he should be the one to doubt of His Resurrection.

iii. By no mere accident, but “ for the greater confirmation of the Faith,” S. Thomas was allowed to be absent when our LORD appeared to His Apostles on Easter Day. He heard the testimony of others—of the women, of S. Peter, of

those from Emmaus, of the Apostles gathered in the upper chamber,—and yet he could not believe.

The news was too good to be true, too wonderful, too overwhelming ; and so S. Thomas says, “ Except I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His Side, I will not believe.”

It was no mere passing exclamation ; for we are told that the other Disciples kept on saying (*εὐλεγόν*) to him, “ We have seen the *LORD* ” ; but to all their assurances he made once for all (*εἰπεν*) the answer, “ Except I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His Side, I will not believe.”

He thought of the *LORD* as He had seen Him in death, with the gaping wounds caused by the nails and the spear. These he must see, these he must touch, before he could believe that his *LORD* had indeed returned to life again.

The very test which he demanded implied an entire misapprehension of the powers of a resurrection body, and showed that his thoughts were, like Mary Magdalene’s thoughts, still fixed, only in a greater degree, on our *LORD* as existing merely under the conditions of earthly life.

But when the proof which he had demanded was offered him, he saw how inadequate it was,

that is to say, he saw how far beyond anything that he expected was the reality ; and so he did not need to touch our **LORD**. Our **LORD** said, “ Reach hither thy finger, and behold My Hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My Side : and be not faithless, but believing.” But Thomas was convinced, and without the test of touch confessed, “ My **LORD** and my **GOD** ! ” He had thought of the resurrection of the dead Body of his earthly Master ; he realizes that it is the living Body of his **GOD** that he sees.

III: Of all the records of our **LORD**’s appearances after His Resurrection, perhaps none is of greater evidential value than the appearance to S. Thomas. For here was one whose doubts were removed, who had the opportunity of testing the truth of our **LORD**’s Resurrection, and who bore witness not only to its reality, but also to its power, when he uttered his cry of adoring faith “ My **LORD** and my **GOD** ! ”

Not only is it of value evidentially, but it obtained for us the utterance of our **LORD**’s blessing upon faith : “ Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed ”: a blessing so dear to us in this age of want of faith.

And yet again, and by no means least in helpfulness or importance, the appearance to S. Thomas teaches us our **LORD**’s patience and tenderness towards those who are honest in their

doubts, and affords us an example of the way in which we should deal with them.

Moreover, to those whose cross in life it is to undergo the tortures of intellectual doubt, it gives hope ; and more than hope—light, with the assurance, too, of the ultimate removal of all doubt and of the gift of faith to those who are sincerely seeking for the truth.

Though we may not be of the class which S. Thomas represents, yet probably most of us have our moments of depression, difficulty, and doubt. At such times let us think of S. Thomas, and of our LORD'S words, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed”; and with S. Thomas, let us cry, in humble but earnest faith, “My LORD and my GOD !”

XIV.

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

“AFTER THESE THINGS JESUS SHEWED HIMSELF AGAIN TO HIS DISCIPLES AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS; AND ON THIS WISE SHEWED HE HIMSELF. THERE WERE TOGETHER SIMON PETER, AND THOMAS CALLED DIDYMUS, AND NATHANAEL OF CANA IN GALILEE, AND THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE, AND TWO OTHER OF HIS DISCIPLES. SIMON PETER SAITH UNTO THEM, I GO A FISHING. THEY SAY UNTO HIM, WE ALSO GO WITH THEE. THEY WENT FORTH AND ENTERED INTO A SHIP IMMEDIATELY; AND THAT NIGHT THEY CAUGHT NOTHING.”

S. John xxi., 1-3.

WITH the record which S. John gives of the appearance of JESUS to the Apostles at the Lake of Galilee and of the miraculous draught of fishes, we begin an entirely new series of manifestations of the Risen LORD. The appearances in Judæa are over, except that last

appearance when our **LORD** led His Disciples out as far as Bethany and in their sight ascended up into Heaven.

At His express command the Apostles had returned to Galilee, their home, and to the scenes endeared to them by so many memories of their Master's work and teaching. *There* was the Lake where most of them had pursued their daily toil before they were called to become fishers of men. There was the Mountain on which had been promulgated the fundamental Laws of His Kingdom, the principles of sanctity, the conditions of happiness. And so it was fitting that the Lake and the Mountain, which had witnessed His early toils, should be the scene of the last manifestations of His risen Life.

Our **LORD**'s appearance to His Apostles on the shore of the Lake, with the incidents which accompanied it, undoubtedly forms one of the most striking, as well as one of the most mysterious of the manifestations of His risen Life.

There is an atmosphere of mystery about the whole occurrence ; the Apostles toiling fruitlessly through the dark night, and just as it began to dawn, beholding the form of a mysterious stranger standing on the shore and asking the question, “ Children, have ye any meat ? ” and then giving the strange command, “ Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.”

I. Then follows the miraculous draught of fishes ; the net drawn up on the shore unbroken, filled with great fishes ; the fire of coals with the fish laid thereon, and bread, prepared for the breakfast of these toilers of the night ; the invitation, “ Come and breakfast,” and then the episode in which our LORD, so pathetically drawing from S. Peter a confession of love, restores to him the Apostolic Commission, and foretells the manner of his death.

Then, in response to a question of S. Peter, came the prophecy, in mysterious words, of the long trial of patient waiting which was to fit the Apostle of Love for his task as the Evangelist of the Godhead of CHRIST, and to prepare him for his eternal reward in Heaven.

An atmosphere of mystery shrouds the whole narrative, and has led all great commentators on Holy Scripture, from S. Augustine downwards, to apply to it the principles of mystical interpretation. We shall not err, therefore, in following their example.

i. We may begin by noticing the two mystic numbers (three and seven) which meet us at the outset, for S. John tells us that it was “ the third time that JESUS shewed Himself to His Disciples,* after that He was risen from the dead.”

It was the seventh appearance, counting all

* *τοῖς μαθηταῖς*, see page 182.

recorded ; for He had appeared on Easter Day to the women, to S. Mary Magdalene, to S. Peter, to the two Disciples on their way to Emmaus, to the Ten assembled in the upper chamber, and, on the octave of Easter, to S. Thomas and those assembled with him. This appearance by the Lake, therefore, was the seventh manifestation of the Risen **LORD**.

And further, we observe that it was to seven Disciples, for S. John tells us that “there were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His Disciples,” seven in all.

ii. But the chief point to be considered is the striking similarity between the first and the last miracle of our **LORD**, both alike recorded only by S. John.

Of the miracle at Cana of Galilee he says, “And the third day there was a marriage at Cana of Galilee”; of the miracle of the draught of fishes, that it was our **LORD**’s third manifestation of Himself to the Apostles.*

It has been said of the first miracle at Cana that it has an importance of its own, not only as being the first exhibition of our **LORD**’s power and the first manifestation of His glory, but (as we should expect from such an occasion) as being a revela-

* $\tauο̄ς μαθητᾱς$, see page 182.

tion of the purpose and method of GOD'S work for man ; the changing the water into wine typifying the lifting up of the lower into the higher, the law of progress leading towards perfection.

And surely, in this last miracle we may see typified the result of all our LORD'S work in the world through His Apostolic Church, the gathering together on the shores of eternity of the "great multitude which no man can number," the fishers and their fish, the missionaries and the souls that they have brought to CHRIST,—and their sitting down with their Master to the Feast which He has prepared in His Kingdom in Heaven.

But here we may pause to consider the circumstances which, as it were, led up to this mysterious scene.

iii. The Apostles had obeyed the command given them through the women, to whom our LORD had said, " Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." They had left Judæ. A time of waiting had apparently elapsed,—the trial of their faith,—and they had returned to their forsaken craft, and resumed their ordinary toil.

If this had been before they fully believed in the Resurrection, it would have seemed an abandonment of their faith and hope. We could understand that if they had given up hope in their

Master's Resurrection, and had come to look upon all the fair promises of His teaching as nothing but a beautiful dream, they would naturally have returned to their avocations in the world.

But we know that if they had abandoned hope, it was only because that hope had been changed into *certainty*. They had seen their **LORD**, seen the marks of His Passion, heard His gracious words, seen Him not once, but many times.

What a magnificent display, then, of faith and hope was this return to their daily labours ! One might have thought that they would have spent the time in nervous expectation, from sheer inability to do anything but think and talk about the strange new life into which they seemed to be ushered by the Resurrection of **CHRIST**. What immense self-control, what great faith it must have required (when they knew that our **LORD** might appear to them at any moment), to take up quietly and calmly the ordinary occupations of daily life !

But was it right for them to do this ? Had not our **LORD**—on the memorable occasion of the first miraculous draught of fishes, when some of them had left their nets to follow Him—made them fishers only of men ? And on another occasion, when He sent them forth two and two, had He not said to them, “ Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your

journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves : for the workman is worthy of his meat"?

Yes, He had said all this at the beginning of His Ministry. But just before His Death He had seemed to give them different directions, which were to guide them when He was no longer with them ; for we read in the twenty-second chapter of S. Luke's Gospel that "He said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip : and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one" (S. Luke xxii., 35, 36).

So now they were following this advice, teaching thus the sublime lesson, so greatly needed by us all, that the period of waiting for CHRIST must be a period of *working*, not of idle expectation ; teaching us, too, that it is in our work that we are often to find our LORD, whereas in idle waiting we do not discover Him.

II. S. Peter said, "I go a fishing," and the others answered, "We also go with thee." "And that night they caught nothing." *That* night ; it was therefore not the first night that they had gone fishing, and their ill-success was apparently an unusual experience. For the night was the right time for fishing, and the morning,

when the fish were able to see the net, was less favourable.

Perhaps this is to teach us that real success depends not so much on favourable circumstances as on our **LORD'S** presence with us and His blessing on our work.

JESUS, Whom they saw standing on the shore, asked the question, “Children, have ye any meat?” and gave the command, “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find,” without being recognized by any of the Apostles. Perhaps the light was not very good, for it was just as the day was breaking. But more probably, as in the case of Mary in the garden, and the two Disciples on their way to Emmaus, there was some characteristic of our **LORD'S** risen Body which hindered the immediate recognition of Him.

Almost all commentators have pointed out that this miracle needs, for its interpretation, to be compared with the similar miracle recorded in the fifth chapter of S. Luke's Gospel, which took place at the beginning of our **LORD'S** Ministry. There is much that is similar in the two miracles, and some things which are in striking contrast. From both we may learn useful lessons.

i. In regard to the points of similarity, we may notice in both the circumstance of the “net cast into the sea,” which in His parable in the thir-

teenth chapter of S. Matthew (verse 47) our L^{ORD} tells us represents the Kingdom of Heaven. In both miracles the net was cast by the hands of Apostles ; in both this was done after a night of toil and failure ; in both there was the express command of C^{HRIST}.

ii. While both miracles, casting their shadows before, set forth the Kingdom of Heaven, yet it is the Kingdom at different seasons and in different aspects.

(1) In the first miracle the Apostles were "called," but as yet were untried ; in the last, they had been tried and chosen. The first, therefore, sets forth the Church of those who are called ; the other the Church of the elect ; the one the Church Militant, the other the Church Triumphant invisible to earthly eyes, and resplendent in its glory in Heaven.

(2) In the first miracle the fishes break the nets and fill the boats, representing the Church on earth, where, as S. Paul says, there must be heresies and schisms, "that they which are approved may be made manifest."

The ship tossing on the waves is like the ark, a refuge alike for clean and unclean.

In the last miracle the net is unbroken, and is drawn up, not into the boats, but to the shore, its contents being hidden in the deep until safely brought to land ; and this shore is the end of the

world, as our LORD Himself tells us in the parable that we have quoted : "When it was full, they drew to shore. . . . So shall it be at the end of the world" (S. Matt. xiii., 47-49). The unbroken net drawn to shore, representing the Church Triumphant, contains, not good and bad, but is "full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three," the number of the elect.

(3) We may trace a further contrast in the number of the Disciples. In the first miracle there were apparently four, S. Peter and probably his brother, S. James and S. John. In this miracle there are seven, the same four and three others.

And here again we may see a mystical significance in the numbers, for the number four represents the Church acting on the world, the Gospel going forth to water and replenish the earth like the four rivers of Paradise ; while seven is made up of the divine number three added to that four, and tells of the HOLY SPIRIT sanctifying mankind with His sevenfold gifts.

In the first miracle, as we have observed, it is the work of the Church Militant which is set before us. In the last the work is done, mankind is sanctified, the Saints are gathered into the Kingdom.

(4) In this last miracle S. John tells us that "they were not far from the land, but as it were

two hundred cubits,"—about a hundred yards,—showing us how near CHRIST was to them in their toil, and reminding us, perhaps, of the struggle in Gethsemane, when "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed" (S. Luke xxii., 41).

And is it not so now?—so slight is the veil between the Church struggling and her glorious Head interceding for her at the Right Hand of the FATHER in Heaven! What courage we could often gain if we kept the thought more before us that our LORD is not very far away, that He is withdrawn only as it were a stone's cast, and is interceding for us whom He has commanded to watch and pray, because He knows the severity of our struggle and the weakness of our flesh.

(5) Again, we may observe that in the first miracle there was no direction regarding the manner in which the net was to be cast. In this the Apostles were commanded to cast it on the right side, reminding us, perhaps, of the sheep, who are gathered on the Right Hand of the Judge.

(6) In the first miracle there was an indefinite number of fishes, in the last one hundred and fifty-three great fishes, a definite number, and yet "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who shall stand before GOD"; when the

sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and the dead, small and great, shall be judged.

Let us therefore ponder this last miracle of our Blessed LORD, striving to gather from it those lessons of hope and encouragement which we need so sorely as we toil upon the waves of this troublesome world—straining our eyes towards the eternal shore where, when the morning dawns, we shall see JESUS standing and waiting to welcome the pilgrims of the night.

XV.

JESUS STANDING ON THE SHORE.

“BUT WHEN THE MORNING WAS NOW COME,
JESUS STOOD ON THE SHORE.” *S. John xxi., 4.*

THE preceding verses of this chapter, which we have already considered, tell us of the Apostles returning to their labours as fishermen and spending the night in fruitless toil. “That night they caught nothing.” But the night passed, and when the morning was come, they saw our LORD standing on the shore.

I. We have here, at the outset, two contrasts : night and morning ; the restless, changing sea and the firm shore.

i. Night and morning. The night of time, of this world ; a night of darkness, of difficulty, of doubt. And the morning of eternity with its brilliant light, when all doubts, all fears shall be cleared away. Night and morning !

Our life in this world is like a journey at night, over mountains, along a road passing close to precipices, which, because of the darkness, we

cannot see. Darkness is the great feature of night and of our life in this world,—darkness and unreality.

And as we dream at night, and awake to find it all unreal ; so in this life we often dream that we are what we are not. We build castles which the dawning day will destroy. We think we are what we are not; think ourselves humble, sincere, perhaps; we measure ourselves by our feelings, by our good intentions, by what we wish to do and to be.

This is one of the characteristics of our life during the dark night of this world ; and when the morning dawns our life will be examined in the clear light of the everlasting day. Not our intentions, not our wishes, not our feelings will be scrutinized, but our actions and ourselves—what we have done, what we are.

And then, in this world, too, we are always making mistakes about others, judging them as they minister to our pleasure or self-interest, not as they really are. In the darkness of this life, again, we sometimes make mistakes about GOD, thinking that GOD is hard—as if that were possible ; thinking that GOD has forgotten us ; thinking that GOD does not care how much or what we have to suffer.

But when the night is over, and the morning comes, and all these unreal shadows have been

dispersed by the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness, our LORD, standing on the shores of eternity, we shall know all things as they are,—ourselves, our neighbours and our GOD.

ii. And then, there is the other contrast—between the restless, changing sea and the firm shore. The sea so unquiet, so treacherous ; ever threatening us with shipwreck, its calms being sometimes more dangerous than its storms ; for it is by those calms that we are lulled into false security, while the storms frighten us and drive us to our LORD for help.

The night upon the sea has to be spent in work which is often disappointing, promising much and ending, or seeming to end, in nothing. This is so of necessity, since the true results of all our labour cannot be really known until the nets are drawn ashore in eternity.

II. "When the morning was now come, JESUS stood on the shore." The true reading of the text here is, "Just as the dawn was breaking" ($\pi\rho\omega\tilde{\iota}\alpha\varsigma\gamma\iota\tau\omega\mu\acute{e}\nu\eta\varsigma$, not $\gamma\iota\tau\omega\mu\acute{e}\nu\eta\varsigma$). Just as the night was dispersing, just as the darkness was fleeing away, there upon the shore stood JESUS.

These few words are a sermon in themselves—an Easter parable. For Lent is our night-time of penitence and sorrow, the work-time in our souls for GOD ; and when the morning began to

break on Easter Day, just as the light was stealing in through the windows of the church, JESUS was on His Altar to receive those who had been struggling and working in penitence—to receive them with the invitation, “ Children, come and dine ; children, come and break your fast ” (for this is what *ἀριστήσατε* means). Yes, the fasts of Lent are over, the gloom of Lent is past, the Feast of Easter come, and the glories of the Resurrection are filling us with exulting joy !

But it is not only as a parable of our Easters on earth that we may take these words ; they may be taken far more truly as a parable of the glorious Easter of eternity. In this world, during the night, in the ship of the Church, labouring, watching, praying, working, sometimes in calms, sometimes in storms, we strain our eyes towards the eternal shores.

i. The *calms* should be spent in learning from CHRIST ; for we remember that the first miraculous draught of fishes, of which we read in S. Luke, was preceded by a calm, when our LORD sat in the little fishing-boat and taught His Disciples.

So when there is a calm in our spiritual life, it is not a time for idleness, not a time for holidays. Our spiritual life is a school which only “ breaks up ” once, and then the holiday is eternal.

In this world the toiler of the night can never rest from his labour, can never give up his watch-

fulness ; but when there is a little, brief space, as it were, of calm in our lives, then we must labour to learn more about GOD, more about His Revelation. Then we must, like good mariners, put our rigging and our ship in order, so that when the storm comes it may find us prepared.

ii. Calm and storm. And if the calm is the time for learning, the *storm* is the time for practising the lesson we have learned, that is, to trust in GOD ; when the storm of temptation or trouble bursts upon us, then is the time, in the words of the Psalmist, to make our act of faith : “ GOD is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof rage and swell, and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same ” (Ps. xlvi., 1-3). Then is the time to make our act of faith, to realize GOD’s presence with us in the Church : “ GOD is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed : GOD shall help her, and that right early ” (v., 5).

And so life passes,—storm and calm, until at last, in the great Easter Day, the eternal calm breaks upon us, and the storm is stilled for ever by our LORD’s words, “ Peace, be still.” And as the darkness is chased away by the dawn of that great Easter Day, we shall see JESUS standing

on the shores of eternity to welcome the pilgrims of time, to welcome the almost shipwrecked mariners across life's sea, safe home, safe home in port,—safe at last in the haven where they would be.

III. But *here* we must work “ while it is called to-day ”; for there “ they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” How sad to reverse the order, to rest here in the rest of idleness, and so to have no work, or but little work for GOD, to follow us into eternity !

Here ceaseless prayer : “ LORD, save us ; we perish ” in the storm ! There prayer changed to praise, to endless Alleluias ; for there the LORD GOD Omnipotent reigneth, and sin and darkness and doubt are gone. Here work and prayer, there rest and praise.

And yet *even here*, amid all the darkness, through all the storm, those who are striving with all earnestness to serve GOD, those whose eyes are strengthened by love and cleansed by penitence, can pierce, as it were, the clouds and darkness of time, and in the distance can see JESUS waiting, standing on the shore, as S. Stephen saw Him when he said, “ Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the SON of Man standing on the Right Hand of GOD.”

Yes, even in this life, those whose eyes are fixed heavenward, who are looking “ not at the

things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," not at the things which are temporal, but at the things which are eternal, those who are straining to pierce the heavens, *they* may see JESUS waiting to welcome them with those words, "Children, come and dine."

Children of the night, children of the morning, children of the Resurrection, you who have been feeding upon His Body here are invited to that Marriage Supper of the Lamb there. "Children, come and dine"; you are invited to that Feast which knows no ending, to that Feast of which your Communions here are but a foretaste, of which your Easters here are but a type.

Let us, then, work and watch and pray; let us repent, cleanse the eye of the soul by penitence, and look forward to that day when, the night being past, the sea crossed, and our work done, we shall see JESUS standing on the shore, welcoming us with the invitation, "Children, come and dine."

XVI.

THE REVELATION OF THE KINGDOM.

“ THEN THE ELEVEN DISCIPLES WENT AWAY INTO GALILEE, INTO A MOUNTAIN WHERE JESUS HAD APPOINTED THEM. AND WHEN THEY SAW HIM, THEY WORSHIPPED HIM: BUT SOME DOUBTED. AND JESUS CAME AND SPAKE UNTO THEM, SAYING, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. AMEN.” *S. Matt. xxviii., 16-20.*

THE appearance of our Blessed Lord to His Apostles and the assembled multitude of believers, in a mountain in Galilee, differs from His other appearances in that it was expected and prepared for.

For S. Matthew tells us that when our Blessed

LORD appeared to the holy women on Easter Day, He said, " Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me." And in the words of our text this is referred to even more explicitly, for we read that the Disciples " went away into Galilee, into a mountain where JESUS had appointed them."

All the other appearances of our Blessed LORD were unexpected. This alone they had been prepared for, by the appointment certainly of the place, perhaps also of the time.

If we had only S. Matthew's account, we might suppose that this appearance was confined to the Apostles. But it is usual to consider that the appearance to " above five hundred brethren at once," of which S. Paul tells us (1 Cor. xv., 6), is identical with this appearance on the mountain in Galilee.

The fact that it had been appointed by our LORD Himself, and was therefore expected, and that there were gathered in that place not only the Apostles, but a very large number of believers, would lead us to expect on this occasion a manifestation of a very special character.

I. And indeed, we may consider this as our LORD'S *regal* manifestation of Himself. As the Messiah He had been anointed on earth by the HOLY GHOST to the threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King; and now, before He leaves

earth to exercise these offices for His Church in Heaven, He delegates them in a spiritual form to His Church on earth.

For, surely, He bestowed upon the Church the *prophetic* office when He promised the **HOLY GHOST** Who should lead His Apostles into all truth, and when He gave the pastoral charge to feed His sheep. He delegated the *priestly* office to the Apostles when He gave them power to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice. And in this manifestation we have the delegation of the *kingly* office ; for, after claiming all power both in Heaven and in earth, He sent forth His Church to gather in all nations, giving His Apostles the keys of His Kingdom,—the power to loose and to bind, which is clearly a kingly prerogative.

Indeed, this manifestation seems especially to bring before us the kingly aspect of our **LORD'S** office. For He appears with His glorified risen Body, as the King of kings, claiming authority over all things, and delegating that authority to the officers of His Kingdom. It is fitting, too, that this occurrence should be recorded by S. Matthew, since His Gospel is especially the Gospel of the *Kingdom*.

II. Again, we may notice the place which our **LORD** chose for this appearance. It was a mountain in Galilee. Mountains have played a great part in **GOD'S** revelation to man.

In the Old Testament they seem especially to designate the holy places of GOD, where He deigned to meet with man. For there we read of Mount Sinai, where the Law was given ; Mount Zion, where the Temple was built ; and Mount Carmel, where GOD answered by fire the prayer of the prophet Elijah.

In the New Testament we have the Mount of Beatitudes, whence CHRIST promulgated the laws of His Kingdom ; Mount Tabor, where He allowed His Apostles for a brief space to behold the Vision of His Glory ; the Mount of Olives, where they saw His conflict and prayer ; and Mount Calvary, where they beheld His Death.

We do not know which of these mountains was the one selected for this great event ; nor, indeed, whether it was any of these, though many writers consider it most probable that it was the Mount of Beatitudes. If this was the mountain chosen by CHRIST, it must have recalled many holy memories of His early Ministry to those who were waiting for His appearance.

S. Matthew tells us that “when they saw Him, they worshipped Him ; but some doubted” ; and this reference to doubters shows us that there must have been others present besides the Apostles, since we know that the doubts in S. Thomas’s mind had been removed when our LORD

appeared to the Apostles, on the octave of Easter Day, which was before they left Jerusalem.

Those therefore, who doubted, were some of the “five hundred brethren” who were assembled waiting for His appearance. When they saw Him in all His glory, and heard His words, their doubts must have vanished at once.

III. S. Augustine considers this the eighth appearance of our LORD after His Resurrection ; and we may observe that these manifestations fall into three classes.

(1) They were to individuals, to meet individual needs, to deal with individual characteristics ; (2) to the Apostles, to bestow on them the gifts and powers necessary for the life and work of the Church ; (3) to the great multitude on the mountain, “above five hundred brethren” (among whom were the Apostles), representing by their number humanity. It is on this last occasion that He tells this Church that they are to make disciples of *all nations*, for He is the Saviour of all men.

As individual souls we need our LORD, for He alone knows us and can help us in all our difficulties. As a corporate organization we need Him, for the Church is His Body. But as a race also we need our LORD, for as the Son of Man, He is the great Head of humanity.

IV. “JESUS came and spake unto them, saying,

All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth." What a royal greeting ! He claims to have received " all authority " ($\varepsilon\xi oνσία$), and all authority can be claimed by none but the King of kings.

What a contrast to Calvary ! On the Cross had been nailed the title written in derision by Pilate, " JESUS of Nazareth the *King* of the Jews " ; and now He reveals Himself not only as King of the Jews, but of all people on earth, and of all Heaven as well.

On Calvary He refused to use His kingly power, and bore His Passion in all the weakness of His Humanity. Not that He for one moment laid aside any attribute of His Godhead in the sense that He did not at that time possess it, for this would have been impossible. Nor was He deprived of the Beatific Vision ; only He refused to yield up the ghost and to terminate His human life before the moment when He could say of His FATHER's Work, " It is finished."

We may observe the contrast between our LORD's regal and Divine power,—claimed and exercised in the words, " All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations,"—and the absence of all earthly power in the humiliation of His Passion.

And we may learn from this contrast a difficult

but much-needed lesson in regard to the work of CHRIST'S Church in the world ; that it is in proportion as the Church abstains from using the mere natural powers of the world to accomplish her spiritual results, that she is able to use those Divine powers which were on this occasion committed to her by her Risen LORD.

V. The early centuries of the Church's history illustrate this. During the first three centuries, when the Church had to depend entirely on the strength which came to her from GOD, when she taught fearlessly and without compromise all the truth which her Master had committed to her keeping, although she had all the powers of the world against her—she grew and increased, not only in numbers but in sanctity, with a strength and growth she probably has never since manifested.

When, however, at the accession of Constantine, she began to use the powers of the world to do her work and enforce her claims, her history presents a piteous spectacle of discord, heresy, and schism, which to some extent has lasted ever since.

And in the various reformations or revivals of the Church's life—such, for instance, as those associated with the names of S. Benedict, S. Bernard, S. Francis Assisi, and S. Dominic—this principle seems always to assert itself ; that it is

just in proportion as the Church refuses to use worldly instruments, and relies upon spiritual weapons in her warfare with evil, that she carries all before her.

VI. Have we not here a lesson much needed in our own age, when we allow Church work to depend so much on the use of *worldly* methods—committees of influential persons, and organizations run “on business principles”—instead of relying upon the almighty power of the HOLY GHOST speaking through the Creeds and working through the sacramental channels of the Church?

Our LORD claims that all power in Heaven and in earth is His, and He has committed to His Church all necessary power on earth. Yet the world thinks the Church’s powers absolutely insignificant and contemptible, and recognizes as something far more effective the puny powers which her children are allowed to wield. And too often, alas! the people of GOD act as though they took the same view.

It is reported of Archimedes that when he discovered the properties of the lever, he exclaimed: “Give me a spot on which to stand outside the world, and I will move the world!”* How truly can they who have discovered the properties of Divine grace say, that in proportion as they can free themselves from the world and stand outside

* *Δὸς ποῦ στῶ, καὶ τὴν γῆν κινήσω.*

its methods and powers, they can sway and move the world at their will.

Humanity longs for the light of absolute truth, and groans under the burden and the darkness of sin. And yet the world, with all its boasted powers, cannot remit one sin or reveal one doctrine of Divine truth ; while the humblest Priest of GOD'S CHURCH, by virtue of the power entrusted to him, can remit to those who are penitent all sin by the application of the Precious Blood of JESUS CHRIST, and can teach all revealed truth with the authority of the Church which he represents.

XVII.

THE GREAT COMMISSION.

“ GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. AMEN.” *S. Matt. xxviii., 19, 20.*

WE have considered the circumstances of our LORD’s regal manifestation of Himself upon the mountain in Galilee, and His revelation that all authority had been committed to Him. We must now pass on to discuss more in detail the terms of the great commission which He gave to His Apostles after declaring His possession of universal authority.

As we examine the details of His charge we can scarcely fail to be impressed with the fact that it seems so fully to meet the difficulties and needs

of the present day, that it would appear as though it had been written especially for our instruction.

When we reflect on this, however, it brings home to us the useful conviction that our age is very much like other ages ; and that the reason why these words seem so appropriate to our own needs is that our **LORD** knew the needs of humanity and in these words provided for them, and that humanity is always very much the same.

When we think we have observed features peculiar to our own times, whether they be adverse or favourable to the growth of Christianity, we probably think them peculiar only because we do not know accurately the experience of other ages.

We may comfort ourselves sometimes with the thought that each age has seemed to those who lived in it especially full of difficulty, and that our **LORD**, knowing the needs of all ages, has provided for each its remedy.

I. After claiming for Himself all authority in Heaven and earth, our **LORD** gives a great commission founded on this authority. He says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." We may observe that the word translated "teach" is, in the original, "make disciples of" all nations, that is, bring them into the Christian fold.

Our **LORD** then goes on to point out the means by which this end is to be attained ; in order to

become His disciples men must be baptized “into the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.”

We have teachers of a spurious Christianity in our own day who tell us that men become the disciples of CHRIST by reading about Him, and striving to frame their lives to some extent upon the moral code which He set forth.

These men tell us that it is not necessary to believe in the tremendous claims which CHRIST makes upon the human soul when He reveals Himself as the Possessor of all power and authority because He is GOD; nor do they consider it important that all His teachings should be accepted and obeyed.

They would allow admirers of CHRIST to choose out of His precepts those which commend themselves to their judgment, or which do not interfere too much with their self-indulgence. In a word, they would allow the claims of CHRIST to be reduced and minimized until they cease to clash with the easy-going Christianity of the present day.

The remedy for such teaching is provided in the words of our LORD, “baptizing them.” Men do not become Christians by *admiring* CHRIST, but by being incorporated into His Body by Baptism. So that at the very outset of the Church’s life our LORD makes the Sacraments the condi-

tion of reception into that society of believers which we call Christians.

II. Again, we hear a great deal in the present day about the beauty of "undenominational" Christianity. And many a scheme has been proposed for Christian unity which would eliminate from Christianity all that is objected to by this or that sect, and take the little that is left as a common basis of union.

But it will be observed that our **LORD**'s charge is singularly "denominational," for He distinctly says they are to be baptized "*into the Name.*" It is difficult to see how undenominational Christians, as they call themselves, can find much comfort in this text.

But we may go further, and ask, what is meant by "the Name"? There can be little doubt that in all such passages as the one we are considering, "the Name" signifies the Nature; and "the Name" here calls for a belief, not merely in the existence of **GOD**, but in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as revealing to us, so far as we are able to comprehend it, something of the Nature of **GOD**.

In the history of **GOD**'s dealings with man we find three very distinct revelations of Himself by means of a Name which reveals something of His Nature.

i. To the Patriarchs He was revealed under

His Name “Almighty,” because they needed first to learn that He was the Source of all authority and power, and that without Him nothing could be done ; the very power by which sin is committed being received from GOD,—the sinners being like rebels, who in their folly are striving to use God’s own power against Himself ; and that therefore He was a jealous GOD, Who would share no worship with other gods, and allow no rival in the affections and homage of mankind.

ii. To Moses a revelation far in advance of this was vouchsafed when GOD appeared to him in the burning bush, and revealed Himself to him under His Name JEHOVAH, the Self-Existing One. This declares the Nature of GOD to be underived, and His existence in both directions to be eternal.

iii. But the supreme revelation of GOD’s Nature was reserved for the Christian Church. For while there are many adumbrations of the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament, the doctrine of the threefold Personality of the one Godhead was first distinctly revealed by CHRIST, and reserved for the Christian Church to define.

All these revelations are to some extent summed up in the Baptismal formula—“baptizing them into the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.”

“Into the Name,” not “Names” (*εἰς τὸ*

ὄνομα, not *τὰ ὄνόματα*). Here we have the doctrine of the *Unity* of GOD as revealed to the Patriarchs and to Moses. But the Name is “the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.” Here we have the doctrine of the *Trinity* as revealed by our LORD Himself to the Christian Church.

III. Without now touching upon the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in its dogmatic aspect, we may briefly notice some points involved in the Baptismal formula.

i. As a Christian you were baptized into the Name of the FATHER.

You have a relation to that Father, Who created you, Who has a purpose for you in life; that FATHER to Whom you stand in the relation not of a slave but of a *son*; that FATHER to glorify Whom is the “end” of your life, and at the same time your life’s truest glory. For to fulfil GOD’s purpose is a glory which is indeed eternal.

When a man in the world attains the end he proposed for himself he often becomes famous; but how short is human fame, and how worthless to the man are the monuments which, as works of art or historical records, speak to the world of his name when he himself has passed beyond this world!

On the other hand, to have reached the end for which you were created, this is truly glorious; to

have fulfilled GOD'S purpose for you, this is indeed greatness !

And then what a sonship is implied when you think of GOD as your *Father* ! A FATHER omnipotent, omniscient, and all-loving, implies a son watched over by Almighty Power and surrounded by all things needful for the development of his life according to GOD'S purpose.

ii. But Baptism is not only into the Name of the FATHER, but also into the Name of the SON.

In the present day, among Unitarians and Humanitarians we hear a great deal about the Fatherhood of GOD and the brotherhood of man ; a doctrine which does not necessarily involve any acceptance of the Christian Faith, and which is but a small advance upon the teachings of mere natural theology.

The Fatherhood of GOD and the brotherhood of man may *sound* well as religious phrases, but what *help* do they afford to the man who has realized the universal fact of sin, the universal necessity of struggle, and who sees in himself the weakness and helplessness which these involve ?

He needs something more than to be taught his relation to GOD as a son to a FATHER. He needs to know of the SON of GOD, Who became Man that He might redeem man ; that He might not only leave man a noble Example of unselfish life, but that He might found a Church which should

minister to all man's needs, and be entrusted with the Sacraments by which his sin could be done away through the Precious Blood of CHRIST, and the cravings of his soul satisfied by that Bread of Heaven which is CHRIST's own Body.

iii. And again, Baptism is into the Name of the HOLY GHOST, telling of that Eternal SPIRIT of GOD, like the FATHER and the SON, Almighty, Whose gracious influence pervades the life, and by its operation sanctifies the soul of the child of GOD.

And then to help him there is the revelation of a communion of Saints, of a great cloud of witnesses who have passed through the same struggle and won their crowns, and who are now watching him, not merely with idle curiosity, but with sympathetic interest, and more, with all the helpfulness that comes from a common fellowship in the Body of CHRIST.

How full of meaning then is Baptism into the Name of the Holy Trinity ! And, when we realize this, how poor seems the substitute of undenominational Christianity !

IV. But not only does our LORD in His charge command His Apostles, for the purpose of making disciples of all nations, to baptize them into the Name of the Father, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST ; but after they are baptized He enjoins upon His Church a further work ; for He

adds : "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Here again our **LORD** seems to anticipate and to provide the remedy for the false teaching of to-day. For there are some who, while accepting Baptism as a mere empty form of admission into the Christian Church, tell us that what we want in the present day is not Creeds, not teaching, but good works, practical philanthropy.

Our **LORD** said nothing about this, except in so far as the corporal works of mercy are included in the things which He has commanded. He says the Church is to teach all things which He has commanded ; and this charge is given to the Church of every age.

One of the most striking contrasts between the Church and the various systems of philosophy which have sprung up during her existence is that they are always changing in their doctrines, while she is always the same.

The Church's doctrine, like her **LORD**, is "the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever." We cannot point out one doctrine of the Christian religion taught by the Church in any age, which is not of obligation now.

Or if we turn from the sphere of dogma to that of morals, we cannot find one thing which our **LORD** said was right in His day, or which the Church has at any time set forth as a Chris-

tian man's duty, which can ever cease to be right.

There is a great effort in our day to reconstruct both the theology and the morals of the Church, to "re-state" the theology of the Church in terms which will be *acceptable* to the thought of the nineteenth century. This is generally only a euphemism for watering down the absolute truth which our **LORD** revealed, to suit the rationalism and unbelief of the age ; it means the re-stating of revealed truth in terms so vague that it will not offend the prejudices of the heretic, schismatic, or rationalist.

The moral law of the Church is similarly dealt with ; for when it comes into direct conflict with the low morals of society, the plain teachings of the Church are often given up, or at least kept in the background, lest they should offend the notorious evil lives who have broken GOD's law but are still received as society's favourites.

How wonderful to think that with all the progress of civilization, and with all the changes which have taken place since our **LORD**'s time, not one precept of His, whether in dogma or in morals, has become obsolete or has lost its practical value ! The Church is still to teach all things which **CHRIST** commanded.

V. "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." So the great commission

ends. Not only does our **LORD** claim all authority in Heaven and earth as His, not only does He bestow upon the Apostolic Ministry all necessary authority, but more still: He says, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The Gospel of S. Matthew begins and ends with the mystery of His name **Emmanuel**. In the first chapter we have the prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a SON, and they shall call His name **Emmanuel**, which being interpreted is, **GOD with us**" (S. Matt. i., 23). And the last words of the last chapter are these: "Lo: I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." We might call S. Matthew's Gospel the Gospel of the Presence of **GOD**.

In the Greek the expression translated "alway" is "all the days"; that is, all the appointed days. This, too, is a consolation to the Church, that nothing happens to her without her **LORD'S** appointment.

Some days are so dark that we are inclined almost to despair; others are so bright and full of hope that the conversion of the world seems almost in sight; some so difficult, when the powers of the world array themselves against the Church from without, or heresy, like a canker, eats into the Church's life from within; some so easy, with the easiness of lukewarmness and sloth, when

the world seems too indifferent even to oppose the Church, and too indifferent to support it, when love seems to have grown cold.

Yet all these are the appointed days ; all these troubles were foreseen by our **LORD**, and through them all He is present. “Lo, I am with you all the appointed days, even unto the end of the world.”

This is the Church’s strength in her battle with evil ; this is the Church’s consolation in all her discouragements ; this is the Church’s power in all her work for souls, that not only does she come forth in her **LORD’S** Name and with His commission Who has all power and authority, but that He comes forth *with* her and *in* her ; that her work is all His ; and that He is with her until the end of the world.

Hereafter it will be the fulness of her joy, that she will be with Him through all the ages of eternity. For this she suffers and toils now in order to prepare herself “as a bride adorned for her husband.” For this she works and prays in order to prepare herself for the great fruition of Heaven.

Here, toil and sorrow, pain and tears ; and yet her **LORD** is with her through it all. *There*, “**GOD** shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away” (Rev. xxi., 4).

XVIII.

THE PASTORAL COMMISSION.

“JESUS SAITH TO SIMON PETER, SIMON, SON OF JONAS, LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE? HE SAITH UNTO HIM, YEA, LORD; THOU KNOWEST THAT I LOVE THEE. HE SAITH UNTO HIM, FEED MY LAMBS.”

S. John xxi., 15.

THREE are few scenes in the Gospel more pathetic than that on which we are now to meditate: the restoration of S. Peter to his place in the Apostolic College, and the bestowal upon him of the Pastoral Commission, after those searching questions which must so bitterly have brought home to him his weakness.

The miraculous draught of fishes had been brought ashore; the mysterious meal had been eaten. Our LORD says to S. Peter, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?”

I. These words must have recalled to S. Peter’s mind, if not at the moment, at least in after time, the two great crises in his spiritual life,—his first meeting with our Blessed LORD, and his great

confession of our **LORD'S** Godhead. On each occasion our **LORD** had addressed him by this title, "Simon, son of Jonas."

We shall better understand the force of our **LORD'S** questions if we give a few minutes to the consideration of the two great events of S. Peter's life to which we have referred.

i. In the first chapter of S. John's Gospel, S. Peter's first meeting with **CHRIST** is described in these words : " And he [S. Andrew] brought him to **JESUS**. And when **JESUS** beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas : thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone " (S. John i., 42).

S. Peter and his brother seem to have been among that school which gathered round S. John the Baptist, and who were waiting in expectation of the appearance of the Messiah. The first to follow our **LORD** had been S. Andrew and S. John. Each of them went in quest of his brother to bring him to **CHRIST** ; and in the verse which we have quoted, there is brought before us most vividly the meeting beween S. Peter and our **LORD**.

Let us try to imagine S. Peter's thoughts when his brother came to him and said, " We have found the **Messias**," and then proposed to take him to **CHRIST**. If we realize at all who it was that S. Peter expected to see—not merely a great man, but the long-looked-for **Messiah** of the Jew-

ish nation—we shall, perhaps, be better able to enter into his thoughts as he followed his brother on the way to our **LORD**.

S. Peter may have turned over in his mind some such thoughts as these : “ What will He be like ? What will He say to me ? Shall I feel that He is different from other men ? What shall I say to Him ? ”

He came into our **LORD**’s Presence, and we are told that **JESUS** “ beheld him.” But these words very inadequately convey the idea of the original word (*εμβλέψας*), which signifies that our **LORD**’s glance was so piercing that it looked him through and through, and read his very soul.

And then, when our **LORD** seemed to S. Peter to have read the very thoughts of his heart, He uttered the prophecy, “ Thou art Simon the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas.” “ Thou art by nature weak and wayward, sanguine and impulsive ; full of generous purposes, ending too often in humiliating failures. Thou art capable of being attracted to noble ideals, but easily diverted from their pursuit. Thou hast at times great courage, but thou art capable of acts of shameful cowardice. This is what thou art, Simon son of Jona ; this is what thou art by nature ; but thou mayest become a Cephas, a rock ; all that is noble in thy character realized, all that is weak overcome.”

We can picture S. Peter leaving our **LORD** with these words ringing in his ears, with the remembrance of that look. “He seemed to know me thoroughly; no one ever looked into my innermost soul, and read me through and through as He did. I feel that He knew me as I am; that He saw all my weakness; but He said that I should be called—that I should become, a rock. And I believe His words; I will become a rock; I will conquer myself!”

And then in the story of his life we read of the process by which he became the rock; how S. Peter came to know himself—his weakness, his dangers—by temptation and trial; and not by temptation only, but by many a fall, many a rebuke. And then, side by side with it all was that wonderful teaching which he drank in from our **LORD**’s lips day by day, and which was to S. Peter the illuminative way, as his temptations were the purgative way, by which he progressed in holiness.

ii. Then there came the second great crisis in S. Peter’s life, when **JESUS** again addressed him by the title “Simon Bar-Jona,” and when S. Peter made the glorious confession of our **LORD**’s Godhead: “Thou art the **CHRIST**, the Son of the Living **GOD**. And **JESUS** answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My **FATHER** Which is in Heaven. And I say also

unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it ” (S. Matt. xvi., 16-18).

But this promise was followed by more trials, more failures ; for when our L^{ORD} went on to speak of His approaching Passion, S. Peter “ began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, L^{ORD} : this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan : thou art an offence unto Me : for thou savourest not the things that be of G^DO^H, but those that be of men ” (S. Matt. xvi., 22, 23).

Afterwards there came S. Peter’s supreme trial, about which he had been warned by our L^{ORD}, when “ J^EESUS answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake ? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice ” (S. John xiii., 38). But in spite of the warning he fell and fell grievously.

Then, broken-hearted and repentant, he had been assured of forgiveness on Easter Day, when the L^{ORD} newly arisen “ appeared unto Simon.”

II. And now he was to receive the Pastoral Commission. But first there came those searching questions, which were answered so humbly, and yet so earnestly.

i. “ Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these ? ” S. Peter had said, “ Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I

never be offended" (S. Matt. xxvi., 33). In his self-confidence he had put himself before all ; and with the memory of his denial upon him that self-confidence is again tested by our **LORD** : " Lovest thou Me more than these ? "

S. Peter replies, " **LORD**, Thou knowest that I love Thee." But he does not venture to say that he loves our **LORD** more than the others ; he has learnt *that* lesson.

Nor does he use the same word for " love " which our **LORD** uses. He is sure of his own personal affection for our **LORD**, and so he uses a word ($\varphi\imath\lambda\varepsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu$) which signifies this. Our **LORD** had used a word ($\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\tilde{\alpha}\nu$) which implied a love more exalted than S. Peter dared to claim. But his answer is true ; and so he is rewarded with the commission, " Feed My lambs."

ii. As we read this passage carefully, we observe certain changes in the words of the original which are not adequately represented in the authorized version of our Bible.

Not only do we observe that the word for " love " in our **LORD**'s question and S. Peter's answer is different, but that when our **LORD** asks the question for the third time, He adopts S. Peter's word for " love " ($\varphi\imath\lambda\varepsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu$), as though He were even calling in question S. Peter's protestation of personal affection.

And this it is which seems to touch S. Peter

to the quick and wring from him that last answer, so free from self-confidence and yet so intensely earnest, “*LORD, Thou knowest all things*”—all my weakness, all my sin, but—“*Thou knowest that I love Thee.*”

Again, in the second charge, we must observe a difference unnoticed in our translation. It is not really “*Feed My sheep*,” as our version has it, but “*Rule*,” or “*Shepherd My sheep*” (*ποιμανεῖ*); so that the threefold charge should really be as follows: “*Feed My lambs*,” “*Shepherd (or rule) My sheep*,” and “*Feed My sheep*.”

III. While this Pastoral Commission applies, of course, in its first and fullest sense to the Apostles and their successors, the Bishops of the Church; yet in a very real sense it seems to set forth the functions of every parish Priest,—functions which, alas, are sadly neglected in our own day.

i. First, he is to feed the “*lambs*.” Here we have brought before us a Priest’s work with the young of his flock; the work of preparing them, let us say, for Confirmation and first Communion, the feeding them with the first elements of religious knowledge and with the first Sacraments. This duty most of the Clergy recognize and strive to fulfil. But alas! so many are content to stop here, and spend all their time and strength in feeding their flock with what S. Paul would call “*milk for babes.*”

ii. The second pastoral commission implies that there is another work for the Priest to do,—to guide, shepherd, or rule not the lambs but the “sheep.” Here we have his office as a director of souls, an office sadly overlooked in the immediate past. Even to-day it is not fully realized that the Priest is a *physician of souls*, a guide, a shepherd ; and that there are difficulties and dangers, weaknesses and diseases in the soul’s life, with which it is his *duty* as one who has “the cure of souls” to deal.

iii. But there is yet a third charge, “Feed My sheep.” This is a stage higher still, and one still more often forgotten in the ministrations of to-day. Not only is the faithful pastor to feed the lambs with the elements of religious instruction and the first Sacraments of the Church, and to guide and shepherd the sheep generally, but he is to remember that as souls progress in the spiritual life they need feeding with different food from that which was sufficient for them in the earlier stages of their progress.

So the last charge is that he should *feed* the *sheep*, the grown members of CHRIST’s Body, those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, hungering and thirsting to know more of GOD and His Revelation to man. And the Priest has to meet the needs of these by instructions in the higher walks of the spiritual life,

in what is commonly called “ascetic theology,” which really means the practical application of the laws of the spiritual life.

Is not this the reason why so many who have begun well in spiritual things fall away and give up the struggle? They have reached a certain point; they cannot stand still; they do not know how to go forward, for they have not been taught what is that life of perfection to which they are called; and so they gradually relax their efforts and become worldly.

To those who realize that our **LORD** has said, “Be ye perfect, even as your **FATHER** Which is in Heaven is perfect,” and who are taught what this life of perfection is, and what is its food, there can be no loss of interest in spiritual things; for each day has its own interest in the effort to become a little more perfect than the day before.

Without this desire for perfection, our spiritual life soon becomes a mere treadmill, a dull routine of duties in which we have lost all interest; but with the hunger and thirst for perfection, one’s spiritual life is a life of the most intense interest, for it is a life of continual progress, a pressing towards the mark for the prize, as S. Paul says, of the high calling of **GOD** in **CHRIST JESUS**.

But this highest stage has its own peculiar food,

not only sacramental but intellectual. There is much to be learned about the higher stages of the spiritual life ;—and how shall they learn without a teacher?

IV. From our LORD's third charge, "Feed My sheep," we may, perhaps, draw a beautiful lesson, though one which is not likely to be often noticed, since it depends upon a reading of the Greek text. The best manuscripts use two different words for "sheep" in the last two charges.* In the second charge it is the ordinary word ($\pi\rho\beta\alpha\tau\alpha$), but in the third charge it is the diminutive form ($\pi\rho\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\iota\alpha$), and this diminutive may be considered a term of endearment.

If we take this view of it, we find among the great class of grown-up Christians, who are included under the general term "sheep," some few, perhaps, who on account of their special sanctity are peculiarly dear to our LORD, and are called to the highest vocations of Christian life, perhaps to that which is technically known as the Religious Life.

In every large parish there would probably be

* In the second charge BC and some old copies read $\pi\rho\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\iota\alpha$, but NADX and most copies have $\pi\rho\beta\alpha\tau\alpha$, and $\pi\rho\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\iota\alpha$ is evidently imported from the third charge, where it seems to be the true reading, being supported by ABC and being a form of tender endearment which goes well with $\beta\acute{o}\gamma\eta\epsilon$.

at least a few such, and it is a parish Priest's duty, as well as privilege, to strive to feed these; not to discourage their aspirations, not to blunt their spiritual instincts, but rather to supply them with that food which may help them to develop what may be an incipient vocation into the higher dedication of themselves as "religious" to God's service.

All these things seem to be suggested by the wording of our Lord's three charges to S. Peter. All these, surely, are included in the pastoral commission given to every Priest. If only our Lord's teaching were more realized by the Clergy, how different would be the life of most parishes! How often the noblest souls turn away from holy things and go back to the world, because what is given them does not satisfy their spiritual cravings!

It is of the greatest importance to realize that all souls are not exactly alike, and that the pastor who endeavours to feed all with the same meat must inevitably be either starving some souls or giving to others food which they have not the power to assimilate.

And those who feel dissatisfied with their spiritual state, who are becoming worried, perhaps, with the monotony of religious duties, would do well to remember that this very restlessness sometimes indicates that they are called to higher things.

They should consider, therefore, not merely how they can hold their present ground, but in what way they can take a step forward in the spiritual life,—in what way they can surrender themselves more entirely to GOD and His service.

XIX.

ACTIVE AND CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

“VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, WHEN THOU WAST YOUNG, THOU GIRDEDST THYSELF, AND WALKEDST WHITHER THOU WOULDEST : BUT WHEN THOU SHALT BE OLD, THOU SHALT STRETCH FORTH THY HANDS AND ANOTHER SHALL GIRD THEE, AND CARRY THEE WHITHER THOU WOULDEST NOT. THIS SPAKE HE, SIGNIFYING BY WHAT DEATH HE SHOULD GLORIFY GOD. AND WHEN HE HAD SPOKEN THIS, HE SAITH UNTO HIM, FOLLOW ME. THEN PETER, TURNING ABOUT, SEETH THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED FOLLOWING ; WHICH ALSO LEANED ON HIS BREAST AT SUPPER, AND SAID, LORD, WHICH IS HE THAT BETRAYETH THEE ? PETER SEEING HIM SAITH TO JESUS, LORD, AND WHAT SHALL THIS MAN DO ? JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, IF I WILL THAT HE TARRY TILL I COME, WHAT IS THAT TO THEE ? FOLLOW THOU ME.” *S. John xxi., 18-22.*

IN the last words of his Gospel S. John brings before us in striking contrast the two types of life and work which are to be found in the Church at all times, and which are always necessary for the Church's growth and usefulness in the world—the active life and the contemplative ; the one characteristic of S. Peter and those heroes of the Cross who, by their self-sacrificing toil, have planted Christianity all over the world ; the other exemplified by S. John in his patient self-effacement, and by those who, like him, have been called to the life of thought rather than to that of active work.

The one has produced the Church as a visible organization ; has built up, as it were, the fabric. The other has inspired it with life, and supplied it with that spiritual teaching by which its life is sustained and guided.

Those who are called to the sphere of active labour in the Church of CHRIST, like S. Peter, have to toil often under great disadvantages and in the face of the strongest opposition, in order to lay the foundations and to build the superstructure of CHRIST's Church all over the world.

But, (if we may use as an illustration the material fabric in which we worship,) although the building may be most substantial in structure and most beautiful in style of architecture, and though it may be supplied with all the accessories

of public worship—yet unless the Spirit of Life be there, unless the teaching from the pulpit be the truth as it is in JESUS, and the offering of the Holy Sacrifice the offering of loving and penitent hearts, the beauty of the fabric will be of little avail.

Nay, better would GOD be worshipped in some hovel or barn where Catholic truth was taught and Catholic worship offered, than in the most beautiful Church in our land where the spirit of worldliness and pride prevailed.

And this is true of the visible Church on earth, the Body of CHRIST. It needs organization, and rules, and precepts ; but behind all this it needs a firm grasp of revealed truth, and the kindling of that fire of the love of GOD, which is the life of grace, the life of GOD Himself in the souls which go to make up His Church.

In the last words of S. John's Gospel our Blessed LORD indicates the work to which each of the two great Apostles, S. Peter and S. John, were to be called, and prophesies to what that work would lead in their individual lives. Let us briefly consider how the work was done and the prophecy fulfilled.

I. We will first take S. Peter, called by natural character and by his special training to be the prince and leader of the Apostolic band. In him we see exemplified the work not only of a great

missionary, but of a great Church founder and organizer.

i. We must remember that our Blessed **LORD** in His lifetime had only formed, as it were, the framework of His Church. His mystical Body was something like the body of Adam, if we may use the illustration, before **GOD** breathed into it the breath of life and Adam became a living soul. It was not until Pentecost, when the **HOLY GHOST** was, so to speak, breathed into the body of the Church, that it became that living organism which was to conquer the world and to prepare men for eternity. And in the first stages of this great work S. Peter is the most prominent of the Apostles.

From the day of Pentecost until we lose sight of him, he is everywhere the spokesman, the leader. He it is who meets and answers the questions which arise in the infant Church. His activity is everywhere evident. By his training, by the bitter experience of many a fall and many an act of penitence, he has become the Rock, to whom the others turn, on whom they lean. **CHRIST** had prayed for him that when he was converted he might strengthen his brethren. His conversion is accomplished, and now we see him going out as a glorious warrior to the fight.

ii. Once only did he err in his judgment and waver in his straightforward course—by his atti-

tude towards the Gentiles at Antioch, of which S. Paul speaks when he tells us that he withstood S. Peter “to the face, because he was to be blamed.”

And how beautiful is this example of S. Peter’s humility, not only in receiving a rebuke from one so much younger than himself, but, as is evidently implied in S. Paul’s words, in having accepted it and changed his course of action,—yet remaining in perfect harmony with S. Paul, and writing of him, as he did, in words of loving commendation.

Yes, one of the great lessons which S. Peter’s life of discipline had taught him was humility. No one can be a rock who has not learned that virtue. Pride always implies the probability of a fall ; humility, as the word itself implies, cannot fall, because it is the *ground* of Christian character.

What an active life was S. Peter’s ! How tremendous was the amount of work he accomplished ! At Jerusalem, at Antioch, probably at Corinth, certainly in Rome, possibly in Babylon, the traces of his labours are to be found. He is indeed the great example, in CHRIST’s Church, of the active life needed then and at all times in building up the work of the Church and carrying its message to those who otherwise would never hear it.

iii. Such was the life of S. Peter ; and our LORD

prophesies its end,—martyrdom. For He says : “ When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest ; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify GOD.”

The world against which he witnessed, whose vices he rebuked, whose opinion he defied, would sooner or later wreak upon him its vengeance. He was indeed to follow CHRIST to the very crown of martyrdom, and he was to have the great honour of dying, like his Master, upon the cross. He had learned by past failures to count the cost. He had said, not in any proud boasting, but in the strength of deepest penitence, “ **LORD**, Thou knowest all things ; Thou knowest that I love Thee.” *That* love was to send him forth to evangelize the world ; *that* love should enable him with joy to win the martyr’s crown.

This much we learn from our **LORD**’s prophecy. But there is a legend generally accepted in the Church, that when the hour of martyrdom caine, S. Peter in his humility asked, and his prayer was granted, that he might be crucified with his head downwards, deeming himself unworthy to die like his **LORD**. Glorious humility of one, whose besetting sin in early life was self-confident pride ! Glorious humility, the virtue of the Rock-

man, which lasted to the very hour of his death !

II. And now we must turn from S. Peter to S. John. For it is recorded that when our LORD finished his words to S. Peter with the command "Follow Me," "Peter, turning about, seeth the Disciple whom JESUS loved following ; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, LORD, which is he that betrayeth Thee ? Peter seeing him saith to JESUS, LORD, and what shall this man do ? JESUS saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou Me." As S. Peter is the great example of the life of active work, so S. John is the great pattern of patient waiting.

i. Moreover, we may observe that in both Apostles grace triumphed over mere temperament.

S. John, the Apostle of Love, with his choleric temperament, his impetuous disposition, we should have expected to have been the example of active work. He was called to discipline and restrain that fiery temperament, to hold himself back from the active work he doubtless longed to do, and to learn by patient waiting through long years of holy meditation that lore which was to be the Church's greatest treasure. He was to read and interpret as none other ever did that Life which is the life of our life, the Life of the SON of GOD Incarnate on earth.

S. Peter, on the other hand, with his weak, impulsive nature, was not the temperament out of which leaders of men are usually made ; but he, like S. John, was enabled to overcome the difficulties of temperament by grace and discipline. So that in both we learn how "GOD hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. i., 27, 29).

ii. Upon the Cross our LORD had given to S. John a legacy of love, the exalted privilege, the supreme honour of being a son to CHRIST'S own Mother. S. John took her to his own house, and from that day forward cared for her.

There is something pathetic, and at the same time instructive in the fact that one of the leaders of the Christian Church, one of her small body of athletes (and that one in some respects among the greatest) was withdrawn, as it were, from active work, to watch over, to care for, and so far as possible to comfort the Blessed Virgin. "Woman, behold thy son ! Behold thy Mother !" had been our LORD'S words. They were understood ; they were obeyed.

And so, S. John, in spite of his impetuous temperament, devotes himself forthwith to a life of retirement and quietness in fulfilling the duty of caring for the Blessed Virgin.

From this we may learn one of the lessons so often taught in the history of CHRIST's Church, that times of enforced inactivity, of patient waiting, are not wasted, are not lost. To the worldly critic it might have seemed that some one of less importance in the Church, with fewer gifts, with less enthusiasm, with a smaller sphere of influence, might have been equally well selected to care for our LORD'S Mother. But it was not so.

Our LORD gave to her, whom He loved so well, His best,—the Disciple whom He loved, the Virgin Apostle, and as such the flower of the Apostolic College, the youngest, the fairest, the most lovable. And S. John, in obedience to his LORD's words, turns away from the career of active work, holds himself back from the great rush of Church life, and in solitude and quietness fulfils his Master's dying charge, and with affectionate and respectful sympathy ministers to the Virgin Mother.

We do not know how long S. John's duty to her lasted, but surely the effects of those years may be clearly traced in the Gospel of S. John, that most wonderful of all works ever written. How much Mary could tell him of JESUS' words and acts! Her perfect sympathy with her Divine Son, her marvellous spiritual insight into all His Life,—are not they revealed in the Gospel of the Godhead of CHRIST? How much S. John

owed to our Lady we can never know in this world ; but we cannot doubt the greatness of the debt.

iii. And when the Blessed Virgin died, and S. John's duty was fulfilled, then he went on pondering the teachings of his Master, and the words of His Mother, enlightened by the HOLY SPIRIT. He learned to read in that great Life what is revealed to us in his Gospel and Epistles. His preparation for this was first the waiting at home with Mary ; then the martyrdom in will at the Latin Gate, when, as Tertullian and S. Jerome tell us, S. John was cast into a caldron of boiling oil, though without sustaining injury ; then, apparently, came the banishment to the mines at Patmos ; and lastly old age at Ephesus.

Through all this long period of waiting, S. John was pondering the words of our LORD, meditating on the events of His Life, developing that spirit of love which enabled him, in words of supreme majesty, of marvellous depth, and yet of great simplicity, to describe for us what, with his eagle eye, he was enabled to see in that Life of CHRIST, the Life of GOD Incarnate.

III. And surely to S. John and to those contemplative souls who, following in his steps, have given to the Church her theology, we owe as great a debt as we owe to those pioneers of the Cross who have spent their lives in *active* work.

i. If S. John's writings were removed from the New Testament, the loss would be so great and so apparent that this value would be at once appreciated.

ii. And the same debt is due, though, of course, in a far lesser degree, to many a soul (trained in the school of S. John) in some quiet monastery far away from the busy haunts of men ;—disciplined in self-restraint, trained in divine love to contemplate the Revelation of GOD, the mysteries of the divine world ;—who has left to the Church precious treasure in spiritual writings, which could never have been written except by one who had lived this life of quietness, of waiting, and of contemplation.

Such works, for instance, among dogmatic theologians, are those of S. Thomas Aquinas ; among ascetic writers, the writings of S. Thomas à Kempis, Scupoli, or Blosius.

iii. The Church needed in her early days, and has needed ever since, the two types of life which are found side by side in these last words of S. John's Gospel, and which are found side by side in every age of the Church. They are mutually complementary ; they are both necessary for the spiritual building up and endowment of the Church of CHRIST. And *now*, as always, both lives are needed.

But S. Peter's life, the life of *active* work, ap-

peals, perhaps, most strongly to the world to-day, with its tremendous rush, with its laborious toil, with its highly developed organization, with its great practical schemes often ending in utter disappointment ; while the life of S. John, the life of retirement and contemplation, attracts but few.

And why is this ? Because the world looks to S. Peter's life alone, to the life of activity ; and forgets that *behind that activity* there must be the spiritual life that is developed not in the rush, not in the struggle, but in the quiet contemplation of GOD'S Word, in earnest meditation and prayer.

This is the spiritual force which alone can make the Church's organization efficient. This is the power without which the Church's machinery must be useless. The work, to-day as always, must be done first upon our knees in prayer to GOD, before we go out to engage in the battle against sin and the world and the devil.

Self-will, self-interest, pride, self-assertion, are the characteristics of much of the active work of to-day. We need humility, prayer, a great desire for GOD'S glory, perfect resignation to His Will, the spirit of waiting rather than the spirit of working, if we are to accomplish great results for GOD.

IV. What a lesson we learn from the life of S. John, in his withdrawal from the struggle at the

period of the Church's greatest need, to spend his time ministering to the Blessed Virgin !

Thank GOD, there are some waiting and thinking and praying to-day, of whom the world knows but little, but for whom GOD cares much, and upon whose prayers the Church's life and work largely depend. Some, perhaps, are cut off from active work by sickness ; others, in obedience to the call of GOD, have deliberately chosen the life of prayer—these are the lights burning like beacons in the storm, helping those who are toiling and struggling upon the waves.

i. S. John was not only a spiritual writer from whom we learn much of the laws of our soul's life ; he was also a great theologian. He is called in the East "The Theologian." Might not theological writers to-day learn a lesson, useful not only to them but to the whole Church, from a study of S. John's life ?

What is much of the "theology" of to-day but crude views on the most difficult subjects, put forth with arrogant self-assertion ! Nothing is too sacred to be attacked, not even an article of the faith is safe from assault ; and yet the attacks are constantly failing, because it is found that the hastiness with which the opinions were formed has again and again led to error.

ii. Such writers should surely learn from S. John's patient waiting and long study, that what is

of value to the Church must be learnt in meditation upon the knees, and not merely by reading the brilliant though irreverent speculations of daring and undisciplined minds.

There are in our day to be studied not only questions of theology, but problems interwoven with the most delicate relations of human life—difficulties in family life and education, social conditions, and religious differences.

And perhaps we may learn from S. John that what we want to-day is not schemes for reunion at the cost of truth ; panaceas for all the difficulties of life, which, like narcotics, simply drug for a while the sensibilities of the Christian conscience, and deaden the pain of the smarting wounds of humanity.

iii. What we want rather is *patience* ; we need to learn from S. John to wait GOD's time, and in the period of waiting to study our LORD's Life and words and works, that in the revelation of the Incarnation a solution of the problems of human life, a remedy for its troubles, and the supply of all its needs may be found.

The words of our text seem to bring before us S. Peter going to martyrdom, S. John longing for it ; the one laying down his life on the Cross, the other patiently waiting till extreme old age, and, in dying, leaving to the world one of its richest possessions,—his meditations on the Life of

CHRIST, his revelation of the mysteries of Heaven,—to be the solace of countless weary souls, and the inspiration of thousands of enthusiastic workers. Thus he teaches us, above all, the lesson so needed in these days of impatient haste: “Tarry thou the **LORD**’s leisure: be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the **LORD**.”

XX.

THE APPEARANCE TO S. JAMES.

“AFTER THAT, HE WAS SEEN OF JAMES.”

1 Cor. xv., 7.

THE appearance of our LORD to S. James is not recorded in any of the Gospels, and is mentioned only in S. Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians.

I. We are met at the outset by two difficulties, two questions: first, Was S. James one of the twelve Apostles? second, If not, was he a believer in our Blessed LORD *before* His Resurrection?

i. The question of S. James’s Apostleship involves the discussion of so many intricate theories that we must simply refer those who are interested in the matter to Bishop Lightfoot’s essay in his work on the Epistle to the Galatians. His opinion, which is accepted by the majority of theologians, though by no means by all, is that S. James was not one of the Twelve, but one of the “brethren of the LORD,” whatever may be the exact meaning of the term “brethren.”

This term is used in four different senses in Holy Scripture, to denote (1) actual brotherhood, (2) common nationality, (3) kinsmanship, and (4) friendship. In the case of our **LORD'S** "brethren" undoubtedly the third of these is to be adopted; but the precise relationship which it denotes must be decided upon other grounds. Some think that S. James was a son of S. Joseph by a former wife; others that he was the son of Mary the wife of Alphæus and sister of the Blessed Virgin, and that therefore he was our **LORD'S** cousin.

ii. If, then, we take the view that S. James was not an Apostle, but one of the "brethren of the **LORD**," we are met with another difficult question: Was he a believer in **CHRIST**?

Here again opinions differ; for we have two traditions. One is probably found on the passage in S. John's Gospel, "Neither did His brethren believe in Him" (chap. vii., 5). This tradition represents S. James's conversion to perfect belief in our **LORD** as the *result* of the appearance after our **LORD'S** Resurrection which we are considering; and those who accept it would place S. James in the same category with the **LORD's** brethren, who did not believe in Him.

The other tradition, quoted by S. Jerome from the apocryphal Gospel according to the Hebrews, relates that the **LORD** after His Resurrection

“ went to James, and appeared to him ; for James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour in which the **LORD** had drunk the cup, till he saw Him risen from the dead.” **JESUS** therefore “ took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to James the Just, and said to him, My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”

Without going deeply into this question, we may observe that there are two difficulties on the very surface which seem to prevent our accepting the tradition of the **Gospel** according to the **Hebrews**.

One is, that it seems to make **S. James** an **Apostle** and to have been present at the **Last Supper** ; the other, that **S. Paul** very distinctly states in the passage from which our text is taken that our **LORD** was not seen of **S. James** until after He had been seen by the “ five hundred brethren at once ” (that is, in the mountain in **Galilee**).

And this appearance, as we have already pointed out,* could not possibly have happened until more than eight days after our **LORD**’s **Crucifixion**. For He was in **Jerusalem** on the **octave** of **Easter Day**, when He appeared to **S. Thomas**, and the manifestation in the mountain in **Galilee** must, therefore, have been later than this.

But that anyone should have fasted for so many

* **Chap. xvi., p. 215.**

days seems most unlikely ; it is therefore highly improbable that our S. James was the one referred to by S. Jerome.

On the other hand, if we accept the first tradition that S. James was not a believer in our LORD until converted by our LORD's appearance to him after the Resurrection, the difficulties do not seem nearly so great. For this appearance entirely accounts for the removal of all traces of unbelief, as in the somewhat similar case of S. Paul, who was converted by our LORD's appearance on the road to Damascus.

Moreover, when we come to examine carefully the text in S. John, we observe on reference to the Greek, that it asserts no more than that the brethren of our LORD did not believe in Him in the fullest sense. For the expression *πιστεύειν εἰς αὐτόν* is to be carefully distinguished from *πιστεύειν αὐτῷ* ; the former (as in S. John vii., 5) implying full belief in a *person*, that is, the unreserved acceptance of his claims ; while the latter signifies the acceptance only of a person's *words* as true.

The two expressions are brought together in striking contrast in the passage in the next chapter, "As He spake these words, many believed on Him [*ἐπίστευσαν εἰς αὐτόν*]. Then said JESUS to those Jews which believed on Him [*πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ*]," etc. (S. John viii., 30, 31).

In the first case the Evangelist is speaking of the unreserved acceptance of CHRIST by those who heard His words ; in the second, he is speaking of those Jews who simply believed CHRIST'S teachings, but did not believe in His Person or claims. The latter had taken the first step, but needed to go on to that fuller faith in Him to which the others had attained.

If we now turn to the statement, “Neither did His brethren believe in Him,” we can see that all that is asserted is that they did not believe fully in His claim to be the Messiah ; but this does not necessarily imply that they (and therefore that S. James) did not believe in Him as a teacher.

II. In the appearance of our LORD to S. James, as in that vouchsafed to S. Peter on Easter Day, we have nothing more than the bare statement of the fact. There it was, “The LORD is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon” (S. Luke xxiv., 34) ; here, “After that, He was seen of James.” In both cases we can form a supposition in regard to what passed between our LORD and His Disciple only by observing the change in character which can be traced in the after life of the Saint.

In the case of S. Peter, who was a type of the sanguine temperament, we were able to point out how the weaknesses of that temperament, which so constantly showed themselves before our

LORD'S Resurrection, seem almost to have disappeared in the history of S. Peter's life after that great event.

In the case of S. James, we have not the same materials out of which to construct his life before the Resurrection ; but from his Epistle, and from what we are told of him by Hegesippus, there seems little doubt that he was an example of the phlegmatic temperament.

Since we only see this temperament in its sanctified aspect in S. James's after life, it may be helpful to compare this with the general characteristics of the temperament in its unsanctified state, and to observe the changes which we may well suppose were the result of this Easter revelation of our LORD.

The phlegmatic temperament, of which S. James was so distinguished an example, has for its principal characteristic that it is very slow in receiving impressions, but that when they are received it holds them with tenacity.

We may note further, on its good side, the virtues of trustworthiness and fidelity. It is the temperament of the man who is true to his promise ; who is true to his friend when he has proved his friend. It is the temperament of the man who is truthful, and upright, and straightforward ; who is steady and courageous, who is consistent and patient, who is free from vanity and ostenta-

tion, and yet not wanting in kindness and amiability.

As the choleric is the most noble, and the sanguine the most amiable ; so the phlegmatic is perhaps the safest, and certainly in worldly matters the most useful.

It is the predominant temperament of the Anglo-Saxon race. And it has been the temperament of some of the greatest soldiers of the world, of men slow in receiving impressions, but tenacious in holding them ; slow in reaching a decision, but when the decision is made, absolutely inflexible in carrying it out. It was the temperament of the general who successfully met and overthrew Napoleon, the greatest soldier of the century,—it was the temperament of Wellington.

But to turn now to its bad side ; for as we listened to the record of its virtues, we might have thought it was the best of all the temperaments. Trustworthy, truthful, steady, courageous, tenacious ! What room is left here for faults ?

But like all the temperaments, it has a dark side ; it is intensely slothful, irritating in its imperturbability, unsympathetic, procrastinating, often superficial, and seldom really thoughtful. At the same time it is the temperament of the man who is always wishing to deliberate, wishing to think, and yet often too slothful really to think a thing out to its end.

It is essentially the practical temperament, and yet sometimes too practical. And alas, worst of all, it is the *selfish* temperament. Its besetting sin is often the sin of covetousness. And it is the temperament which is least able to see its own faults.

The choleric man is generous, and, like most generous people, ready to see at once his fault. The sanguine man too is generous, and realizes his weakness.

But it is very difficult to make any impression at all on the phlegmatic man. He it is who is slowest to see his faults ; and unless the temperament be sanctified by grace it is in great danger of becoming self-centred and selfish.

The choleric man espouses a cause—not often his own cause,—the cause, perhaps, of a friend ; and he espouses it with all his heart. The sanguine man, too, is ready to rush into almost anything that he thinks noble and good.

But the phlegmatic man, unless sanctified by grace, is constantly holding back when the time for action arrives, seeing difficulties, shrinking from them, and allowing duties to go undone and opportunities to pass unused.

III. When we compare this description of the phlegmatic temperament with what we know of the characteristics of S. James, we see at once how great a work grace must have done in his soul. For while we are able to trace most of the good

features of the temperament, the bad ones, at least in their darkest form, are not to be found at all in him.

i. If we first try to study the character of S. James as manifested in his Epistle, we shall observe at once how intensely practical he is. There is no doubt that the Epistle of S. James is less deeply spiritual than the other books of the New Testament, but it is more intensely practical.

S. James is impatient of mere profession and sentimentality in religion ; the value of a man's religion, he tells us, is to be determined by his actions. "Show me thy faith without thy works," he says, "and I will show thee my faith by my works." He is not content with the mere form of religion ; he tells us that "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the FATHER is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

The Epistle may not be spiritually deep, but it is thoroughly practical. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."

In the second chapter, also, we have some important teaching on practical benevolence, to the effect that true charity does not, and indeed cannot, confine itself to mere words of sympathy. In

the third chapter we find practical teaching about the sins of the tongue.

In the fifth chapter he tells us what should be done in times of sickness and death, giving practical instruction in regard to sending for the Priest, the administration of Unction, the practice of Confession, and of Intercessory Prayer.

All these things are treated not from a doctrinal but from a practical point of view. Indeed, there is scarcely a doctrinal reference in the whole Epistle, which is exclusively concerned with the daily duties of a Christian man's life.

ii. S. James rose to a position of great prominence in the early Christian Church, becoming finally the Bishop of Jerusalem ; and we find him presiding at the first Apostolic Council (of which we read in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts), summing up its discussions, and pronouncing its sentence in regard to the matters brought before it.

Hegesippus, a converted Jew who flourished in the latter half of the second century, says of S. James that he was "that James who had been called Just from the time of our L ORD to our own days ; for there were many of the name of James. He was holy from his mother's womb ; he drank not wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat animal food ; a razor came not upon his head. He did not anoint himself with oil ; he did not use the bath. He alone might go into the Holy Place, for he

wore no woollen clothes, but linen ; and alone he used to go into the Temple, and there he was commonly found upon his knees, praying for forgiveness for the people ; so that his knees grew dry and thin like a camel's, and he was constantly bending them in prayer, and entreating forgiveness for the people. On account, therefore, of his exceeding righteousness, he was called Just, and Oblias, which means, in Greek, The Bulwark of the People, and righteousness, as the prophets declare of him."

Hegesippus goes on to give many interesting details of the teaching of S. James, and ends by telling us of his martyrdom. He says " that on account of his witness to our Blessed LORD, he was hurled by some scribes and Pharisees from a gable of the Temple ; and that, not being killed by the fall, they began to stone him, saying, Let us stone James the Just ; and that he turned round, and knelt down, and cried, I beseech Thee, LORD GOD, FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Finally, one of them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he pressed the clothes, and brought it down on the head of the Just One. And so he bore his witness ; and they buried him on the spot by the Temple. This was shortly before Vespasian commenced the siege of Jerusalem." *

* Eusebius, ii., 23.

And this was the Saint to whom our LORD appeared after His Resurrection. By His manifestation of Himself He transformed one who by temperament was slow to accept truth, into the great Saint who lived as "the Just," and died a martyr's death as Bishop of the Mother Church at Jerusalem.

XXI.

THE LAST WORDS.

“WHEN THEY THEREFORE WERE COME TOGETHER, THEY ASKED OF HIM, SAYING, LORD, WILT THOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE AGAIN THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL? AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO KNOW THE TIMES OR THE SEASONS, WHICH THE FATHER HATH PUT IN HIS OWN POWER. BUT YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER, AFTER THAT THE HOLY GHOST IS COME UPON YOU: AND YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME BOTH IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDÆA, AND IN SAMARIA, AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH.” *Acts i., 6-9.*

IN these verses we have the last recorded words of our LORD to His Apostles before His Ascension. From the third verse of the first chapter of the Acts we learn that the entire interval between His Resurrection and Ascension was forty days, and that during that time He spoke to them “of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD.”

There may have been, probably there were, many appearances which are not recorded, but it seems certain that on the occasion described in the words of our text we have actually our **LORD**'s last words. For in the ninth verse we read that "when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up : and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

In the fourth verse we have an account of a previous appearance when our **LORD** had told them that they were to remain at Jerusalem and to wait for the promise of the **FATHER**—that descent of the **HOLY GHOST** of which He had spoken to them so fully on Maundy Thursday night. This we may pass over, and proceed to the consideration of our **LORD**'s last words.

I. The passage begins with the question asked Him by the Apostles, "**LORD**, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to **Israel**?"—a question which brings home to us very forcibly the enormous change which was wrought in the Apostles afterwards by the **Gift** of the **HOLY GHOST**.

For here, but ten days before Pentecost, we find them still clinging to their old Messianic hope of a temporal restoration of the Jewish kingdom. In spite of the revelation on the mountain in Galilee, when they were told to go and make disciples of all nations, they still appear to have thought that

there must be some special advantage for the Jews.

And this restoration of the kingdom to Israel probably meant in their minds not only freedom from the Roman domination and a restoration of the glories of the kingdom as in the days of David and Solomon, but something more ; perhaps a consummation of all those glorious prophecies throughout the Old Dispensation which pointed to the days of the Messiah, and to which they, like the Jews before them, were giving a temporal and local significance.

They felt that they were on the very eve of a great revelation of their Master's power and glory, and with hearts fired with patriotism they asked, in no mere spirit of idle curiosity, but rather prompted by hope, whether this revelation of their glorified **LORD** would not be the occasion of the complete establishment of that Messianic kingdom to which every Jew had looked forward as the consummation of all that was glorious in the history of his nation.

Out of the fulness of His divine foreknowledge our **LORD** might have answered directly in the negative. But He did not. He rather takes the opportunity to instruct them that such things are in the hands of **GOD** alone ; that their duty is to bear witness to Him, and that it is through such witness that His Kingdom is to be established.

Our **LORD**'s answer in this place reminds us of

His similar answer in S. Mark : “ But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the SON, but the FATHER. Take ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is ” (S. Mark xiii., 32, 33).

There He had been speaking to them of the end of all things, of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds, with power and great glory, to establish His eternal kingdom ; and He warns them that the time when this shall happen is hidden from the knowledge of man in order that man may be always watching, expecting, preparing for it.

Throughout His Ministry He seems to teach us that it is not for us to pry with over-curious eyes into divine mysteries, or to seek to know the “ when ” of GOD’S providences ; rather we are to be content to do our duty in the great present, leaving the future to the loving hands of a merciful GOD.

He tells them that it is not for them to know “ the times or the seasons ” ; but He again promises them power through the coming upon them of the HOLY GHOST. He tells them that for superhuman knowledge they are not to look, although miraculous powers will be granted to them for their work and the confirmation of their teaching.

This power which they were to receive so soon was to transform them, to enlighten them,

not that they should know all things, but that they should be guided into all truth,—that they might know all things that were necessary to guide themselves and others in the ways of GOD'S appointment.

II. And then He ends by telling them of one special purpose for which this power was to be given—that they are to be witnesses of Him, that they are to be His martyrs (*εὐεσθέ μον μάρτυρες*).

And what did this involve? The showing forth in themselves of His life. They had followed Him through the trials of His Ministry, they had heard His teaching, they had seen His miracles, they had beheld His Death, they had been assured of His Resurrection. Now they are to go out into the world and witness to these things.

Not only are they to tell the story of His Life and Death, with the eloquence which love for His memory will beget; but, after having received the power of the HOLY GHOST, they are to show forth in their lives *the effect* of what they have seen and heard. They are, as S. Paul writes to the Corinthians of himself, to be “always bearing about in the body the dying of the LORD JESUS, that the Life also of JESUS might be made manifest in our body” (2 Cor. iv., 10).

How they fulfilled our LORD'S command the rest of the New Testament tells us. We find a

handful of weak, timid, and ignorant men, so transformed through the power of the HOLY GHOST given them at Pentecost, as to become stronger than all the powers which could be arrayed against them; bolder, more courageous than the greatest heroes of history; and wiser than the wisest philosophers the world has produced.

And all this strength and courage and wisdom was directed to one great end, to the fulfilment of our LORD's last command,—to witnessing to Him. Wherever they went the topic of their preaching was the same, JESUS and the Resurrection, JESUS Who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. His Life, His Death, His Teaching,—this was the theme of all their discourses.

It was as though those last words, "Ye shall be My witnesses," were ever ringing in their ears, and that last Vision of Him, as the cloud received Him up out of their sight with His Hands raised in benediction, ever before their eyes.

And this it was which enabled them to speak with words of such burning eloquence, not of an historical CHRIST Whom once they had known, Whose Life was beautiful and His Death pathetic, but of a *living, present* LORD, Who had said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

So they preached, and so they lived, that men "took knowledge of them, that they had been

with JESUS" (Acts iv., 13). And when they were persecuted and beaten and punished for their witness, they departed "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name" (Acts v., 41).

The effect of their testimony is among the things which can be most clearly traced in the history of the world. In every country, in every clime, wherever the Cross has been planted and the Gospel of CHRIST preached, there are the fruits of the witness of CHRIST'S Apostles. Well has the prophecy of the Psalmist been fulfilled: "Their sound is gone out into all lands: and their words into the ends of the world" (Ps. xix., 4).

III. But it is not for us merely to admire the splendid heroism of our LORD'S Apostles, merely to observe the enormous powers conferred upon them by the HOLY GHOST as evidenced in their changed lives after Pentecost, in order to do no more than trace all these back to the thrilling charge with which our LORD departed from them, "Ye shall be My witnesses." For we must remember that the same words have been spoken to us, the same Gift has been given to us, and that it is the duty not only of the Priest of the Church, but of every baptized member of it, to bear witness to CHRIST.

And surely this is what is needed now, as it

was needed in the apostolic age. Then all the forces of the world were arrayed against Christianity, but the power of a handful of ignorant men, that is, the power of the HOLY GHOST, which was in them—was sufficient to conquer all opposition, to overcome all difficulties, and to convert the world.

And while we are inclined to say, and perhaps with some reason, that our lot is cast in evil times, that the age in which we live is not an age of faith ; yet the difficulties we have to meet, the obstacles we have to conquer are trifles compared with those which confronted the Apostles.

We have the same charge, “Ye shall be My witnesses.” We have the same power, the promise of the FATHER, the Gift of the HOLY GHOST. If only we were to use it as the Apostles used it—not merely in talking about the teachings of CHRIST, but in bearing witness in our own lives to the power of CHRIST—how glorious would be the result !

What is it that the world needs ? Scarcely theological discussion, for we have a very Babel of religious speculation all round us to-day. What the world needs is the example of Christ-like lives, the witness of men who believe in CHRIST and His teaching ; not merely as an intellectual conclusion for which they are ready to argue, perhaps even with bitterness ; but as a

moral conviction, for which they are ready to live, and if need be to die.

An earnest life, not a brilliant argument, is the force by which the world is to be converted to-day, as it was converted in the early ages of Christianity.

How are we to bear witness? Surely by comparing our lives with the pattern put before us by our Blessed LORD, and striving to conform ourselves more and more to His example.

Let us not read the words of the text and try merely to estimate their effect upon the Apostles; but let us consider them as addressed to ourselves, and strive to show forth their power in our lives. After that we have received the gift of the HOLY GHOST, we must be His witnesses.

We have received the power in Baptism, in Confirmation. How are we fulfilling the charge of bearing witness to CHRIST? The words of the last charge of our Blessed Master should ring in our ears. The power throbs, as it were, in our souls. The Vision of His Ascension, with His arms upraised in blessing, should be present to our sight; and then how changed our lives would be, how great their effect upon the world in which we live!

XXII.

THE APPEARANCE TO S. PAUL.

“ AND LAST OF ALL HE WAS SEEN OF ME ALSO,
AS OF ONE BORN OUT OF DUE TIME.”

1 Cor. xv., 8.

OUR LORD'S last appearance after His Resurrection! It was altogether unique in regard to time and circumstances, as well as in its far-reaching effects, both to S. Paul and to the Christian Church at large.

A considerable time had elapsed since our Blessed LORD's Ascension. The cloud had received Him out of the sight of the gazing Apostles, and they expected not to see Him again until, as He Himself had prophesied, and as the Angels foretold, He should come “in like manner,” that is, “in a cloud with power and great glory” (S. Luke xxi., 27).

But there was to be one more bodily appearance, and that last manifestation so strange, and fraught with such enormous consequences to the world, that we may well say that it was in some

sense the greatest of the manifestations of the risen **LORD**.

The other appearances had been to those who knew, and loved, and *believed in* our **LORD**; unless, indeed, we accept the theory of S. James's want of faith. This was to one who probably had never seen our **LORD** in the flesh, and who neither loved nor believed in Him; but was, indeed, His sworn foe and, at the very moment of our **LORD**'s manifestation of Himself to him, was engaged in the work of persecuting His followers.

I. It is impossible to fix accurately the time of S. Paul's conversion; some writers, such as Ramsay, placing the event as early as A.D. 33, while the majority would probably agree with Fouard in thinking that it occurred about four years later.

The circumstances are so well known that we need scarcely do more than touch upon them. In the sixth and seventh chapters of the Acts of the Apostles we find described with exceptional vividness the story and scene of S. Stephen's splendid defence and glorious martyrdom.

In the ninth chapter we are introduced to a member of the Sanhedrim who had consented to S. Stephen's death, and had, perhaps, been one of the foremost among his persecutors; of whom indeed, we are told, that he was the young man at whose feet the witnesses laid down their clothes when they stoned Stephen.

S. Luke tells us that this young doctor of the law, whose name was Saul, had started on the road to Damascus, with the intention of seeking there for Christian converts, that he might bring them, whether men or women, bound unto Jerusalem.

Then in a few graphic words S. Luke (who afterwards became this young man's friend and travelling companion, and doubtless heard many times from his own lips the details of the event which he describes) tells us of an experience which, while in its literal sense it is altogether without a parallel, yet became the pattern of our LORD's dealing from time to time, and under exceptional circumstances, with other favoured souls.

The incident is described in the following words: "As he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a Voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, LORD? And the LORD said, I am JESUS Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the LORD said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts ix., 3-7).

The dazzling light, the thrilling Voice, the solemn question, all bring before us a scene in its fulness quite unique, as we have said, in Christian experience, and yet more or less the type of every true conversion. The glorious light, so far beyond the splendour of the noonday sun, blinded Saul ; "and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man . . . and he was three days without sight" (vv. 8, 9).

II. What a contrast ! From brightest light to pitchy darkness ! And yet how wonderful and how fruitful must have been that darkness ! With all the world shut out and the eyes of the soul turned inward, with the recollection of the Vision, with the words still ringing in his ears, those three days of darkness must have been the retreat in which S. Paul thought out and faced all that was involved in his conversion, in which he thought out and grasped the meaning of our LORD'S words to him.

Let us strive to enter into S. Paul's thoughts as he considered, during those three days of darkness and solitude and fasting, all the consequences of the act of self-surrender which he had made when, without a moment's hesitation, he said, "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do ?"

i. On the side of encouragement, there were the possibilities which that Vision for the first time suggested, but of which he had never

dreamed. There were awakened in him hopes of a world beyond, in which the craving of his soul should be satisfied by the possession throughout eternity of Him the very sight of Whom had won his love and transformed his whole life.

ii. But then, on the other hand, there came before him the enormous sacrifices which his change of faith involved : the stultifying of all his past life ; the destruction of his hopes and ambitions ; the loss of all his friends ; the surrender of the prejudices and beliefs of a lifetime, with forfeiture of everything that would be dear to a man like S. Paul. The sacrifice demanded was indeed tremendous.

iii. Again, in those days of darkness he faced the probable future, with its hardships and evils and cares. He saw the stupendous work to be done, and the entire absence of visible means for its accomplishment. He saw that he would have to strive almost alone against the world, his only allies being a few unlearned fishermen and Galilean peasants. The most brilliant leader among the Christians, so far as he knew, had been put to death, and with his aid.

iv. We should not be able to comprehend at all fully what these sacrifices involved, if we did not take into account the temperament of S. Paul, which so greatly intensified his appreciation of the difficulties before him.

For S. Paul was a great example of the melancholic temperament which, while on the one hand it made him exquisitely sensitive and greatly enhanced his sufferings, on the other hand gave him an intellectual grasp of his position which showed him in the clearest light all its difficulties.

Had S. Paul been a man of sanguine temperament, like S. Peter, we can understand that he would have thought only of the glories which the Vision had revealed to him, and, dazzled by their splendour, would have been blind for the time to all obstacles and dangers.

But with S. Paul it was not so. While he realized the magnificent future which had been opened to him, while he did not underrate one whit the dignity of being a follower of JESUS, yet he also saw, with a keenness of vision that few possessed, all the difficulties which lay in his path.

v. Then there was also the possible doubt, not whether he should obey the call—about that he never hesitated after he uttered the words, “LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?”—but whether he would be sufficient for these things. For as yet, we must remember, he had no experience of the power of Divine grace; he knew no one who had passed through the same trial on whom he could look as an example.

Having, however, counted the cost, he gave

himself altogether to CHRIST ; and his after life shows us that there was no looking back, no further hesitation. Henceforth his motto was, " This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS " (Phil. iii., 13, 14).

III. S. Paul realized, to some extent at least, the consequences to himself involved in the acceptance of our LORD's call. But how little (we may suppose) did he think of the consequences to the world !

We, from our post of vantage, can better estimate them, and yet we do not see them in all their fulness. As we look back we see churches founded, souls converted, ecclesiastical difficulties and disorders of the infant Church met, and by his large-hearted wisdom to a great extent overcome. We also possess those writings, which have been a light to the Church of all ages ; and that teaching of the doctrine of Divine grace, which is in a special sense S. Paul's contribution to the theology of the Christian Church ! And then, too, there is that marvellous analysis of the human soul in its life of struggle and temptation, which is the basis of so much in ascetic theology, and the help of so many in the guidance of souls !

In estimating the effect upon the Christian Church of S. John's life of patient waiting and meditation, we tried to think what would be the loss if his Gospel, the great fruit of that life, were taken away from the Church. In the same way, perhaps, we may best understand the effects of S. Paul's conversion upon the world by endeavouring to realize how much poorer the Church would be in her dogmatic, moral, and ascetical theology, if we had not S. Paul's Epistles to be our guide in these three important departments of the Church's teaching.

IV. We have been studying our **LORD'S** appearances after His Resurrection, not only that we may trace their effects upon those to whom He made Himself manifest, but also that we may learn from each case some lesson to help us in life in this world, which is but a preparation for the great Eastertide of eternity. And perhaps it is not too much to say that from no one of our **LORD'S** Easter revelations to individuals can we learn more than from this appearance to S. Paul in the way to Damascus.

i. For we learn something of that strange experience of every faithful soul which we describe under the term "conversion." It is a word which has often been perverted in its use, but which the Church, nevertheless, cannot afford to lose. It implies nothing more than the turning of the will

to GOD; and of course, when the will turns to GOD it means the turning of the whole being to Him. There are several mistakes about conversion, especially as the term is used by Sectarians, which it may be well briefly to notice.

(1) It is often confused with "regeneration." Conversion is the act of man; regeneration is the gift of GOD. It is true that man cannot turn to GOD unless by His preventing grace GOD puts into man's heart the desire to turn to Him. But regeneration has nothing to do with this. It is a special "grace" given by GOD of His own goodness (through the medium of a definite Sacrament, Baptism), which man cannot in any sense merit, but by which the recipient is incorporated into CHRIST, and made a child of GOD by adoption and an inheritor of Heaven.

(2) Again, some think that there is only one way of being converted, that is, suddenly and with intense emotion. But there are *gradual* as well as sudden conversions, for the HOLY SPIRIT does not work in all souls alike; and while among the Saints we find many instances of conversion which remind us of S. Paul's, we also find not a few whose conversion was most gradual.

(3) Another mistake is the supposition that conversion is everything. It is really only the *first step*, and, if we stop there, it is of no value. It is of no use to turn to GOD and stand still. We

must follow our LORD ; and this implies advance.

When S. Paul was converted, he tells us himself that he pressed forward to the mark for the prize. And we know that it did not exempt him from receiving the Sacraments of the Church, for we are expressly told that Ananias was sent to baptize him.

(4) A fourth mistake is the notion that we can be converted *only once*, whereas we need conversion every time we turn away from GOD ; and in the history of almost every spiritual life more than one conversion can be distinctly traced.

Indeed, it is a principle of spiritual life that there are usually at least two conversions : the one from sin to self, when the soul wakes up to its own possibilities and serves GOD largely for His gifts ; the other from self to GOD, when the soul realizes that it cannot rest in gifts but must find its end only in the Giver, GOD.

ii. We learn, too, from S. Paul's history, the great *test* of our conversion, which is a desire to obey GOD. S. Paul's first question was, "LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do ?" And his after life shows us how thoroughly he fulfilled the promise of obedience which this implied.

(1) It would be well for us often to ask ourselves whether we desire unreservedly to keep all GOD's commandments, and that all GOD's Will should be done in us and by us ; for if we find that this

is our case, we may be sure that our will is turned absolutely to GOD.

If, however, we are willing to keep only some of His commandments, and not all of them ; if, indeed, there be but one which we neither desire nor intend to keep, then our will is averted from GOD, and we need conversion.

Even those who are living earnest lives require very often to direct their wills anew to GOD ; for though they have started with the intention of surrendering themselves wholly to His service, the attraction of the creatures of this world is very liable to divert the will from its straightforward course to GOD.

(2) If this complete obedience to GOD'S Will seems to demand of us too great a sacrifice, we must remember that another test (or rather effect) of true conversion, which goes with obedience, is the spirit of trustfulness in GOD.

A really converted soul finds no more difficulty in trusting GOD than a little child does in trusting its earthly father ; and our Blessed LORD Himself has told us, " Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven " (S. Matt. xviii., 3) ; where He associates conversion with the possession of a childlike spirit.

The two most prominent virtues which belong to childhood are obedience and trustfulness. If,

then, our conversion has made us like little children, we shall have no difficulty in taking GOD for our GOD and our FATHER ; and not only obeying Him, but trusting Him to give us the strength to accomplish what He commands.

We shall have the spirit of David, the man after GOD'S own heart, who could say of GOD, “*The LORD is my Shepherd ; therefore can I lack nothing.*”

We find this trustfulness in S. Paul, both at the time when he asked the convert's question, “*LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?*” and throughout his whole life.

iii. Another most valuable lesson which we may learn from S. Paul's conversion is the importance of counting *the cost* when we really give ourselves to CHRIST ; that we may not only turn our wills to GOD, but that we may follow our LORD in the narrow way which leads to eternal life.

We read of a man who came to our Blessed LORD during His Ministry on earth, and said, “*LORD, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.*” And our LORD said to him, “*Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests ; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head*” (S. Luke ix., 57, 58).

Here we have one who was attracted to our LORD, was turned towards Him, converted, so to

speak, and who in the enthusiasm of his conversion made a great offer, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Our Blessed **LORD** does not reject the offer, but puts plainly before him the hardships and trials which it involves, by telling him of the homeless condition of the Son of Man, Who had not where to lay His Head.

We may learn, as perhaps the most important lesson of S. Paul's conversion, the *cause* of the failure to persevere which we observe in the case of so many who have started well in their spiritual life.

It is not that they were not in earnest at the time of their first conversion to **GOD**, but that they did not stop to consider the consequences of their conversion. And so, when difficulties and obstacles and temptations met them in their spiritual life, they became disheartened and gave up the struggle.

The three days of blindness during which S. Paul was left all alone, were devoted to the consideration not only of the Vision which he had seen and the Voice which he had heard, but of the consequences involved in obeying **CHRIST**'s call.

It is something like this that most men need at the beginning of their spiritual life, and, indeed, not only at the beginning but continually from time to time; something in the way of a **Retreat**, when being alone with **GOD** they can really

think out in His Presence what it is that GOD calls them to do, all that is involved in obedience to that call—not that they may reject it, but that they may accept it prepared for whatever difficulties may meet them in following CHRIST.

V. May we not fitly conclude these Eastertide thoughts by asking ourselves some such questions as these :

i. Have we ever realized the *glorious possibilities* involved in GOD's loving call to serve Him? Have we ever thought of what we might become, what we might do, if we were indeed to consecrate *all* our faculties to *GOD*?

We build many castles in the air in connection with this life. Have we ever earnestly thought over the possibilities of the life to come in the Presence of GOD in Heaven, if we were now to develop all the powers of our nature in accordance with GOD's gracious purpose for us?

ii. Then, again, have we really tried to estimate the sacrifices which perhaps GOD may demand from us? That is, have we counted the cost, considered the difficulties which we may have to meet, the trials which we may have to bear, the temptations which we may have to overcome?

iii. Can we really say to GOD, “*LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?*”—having counted the cost, and being ready to do what He tells us, trusting to His grace to enable us to do it?

If our trials and temptations seem very great, let us turn back to Good Friday, and lift our eyes to the Cross once more, and see what JESUS did, and bore, and suffered for us ; and then ask ourselves if *any* sacrifice can be too great for us to make if we really love Him.

Eastertide, as it comes round year by year, shows us in our LORD's risen Life something of the glories and possibilities of our own ; and as Eastertide passes away it calls us, in this last appearance of our LORD to S. Paul, to raise our eyes from earth to Heaven, where our LORD is now reigning ; and to resolve that all our life here shall be spent in the preparation and development of the powers of our immortal soul, that they may have their full beatitude and fruition in the glorious Eastertide of eternity.

THE END.

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